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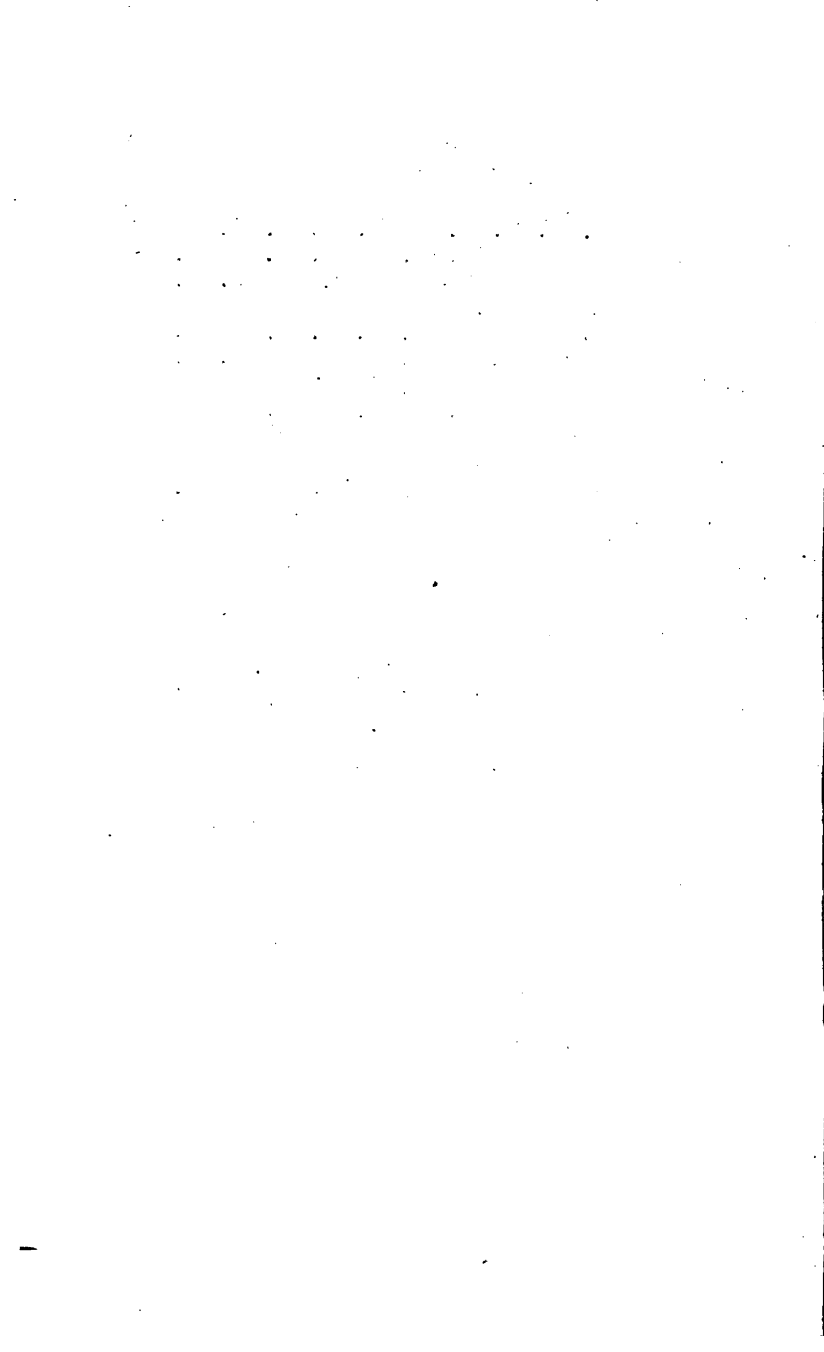
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THE SERAMPORE CONTROVERSY—MR. HALL'S SETTLEMENT IN  
BRISTOL—DISSENTERS' ORDINATION—CATHOLIC EMANCI-  
PATION—THE REFORM BILL.

1827—1832.

MR. FOSTER's mental structure and habits obviously led him rather to be a meditative observer of human life and character, than to engage with ardour in practical concerns. Technical punctiliös, and formalities were his aversion; and it costs no effort to believe, that "he never had the least curiosity to inquire into the official affairs of societies and committees."\* In one important instance, however, he was not satisfied with being a "quiet looker-on," but maintained a course of strenuous exertion on behalf of what he deemed to be a meritorious cause, when he saw it exposed to desertion and obloquy. "I am afraid," he said to a friend in 1826, "we most amiable and liberal-minded Baptists shall be getting into something like war about the matters relating to Serampore." To persons familiar with the proceedings of religious institutions in the present day, an allusion will readily be understood to be here made to the differences that arose after Mr.

\* Missionary Discourse, p. 499.

Fuller's death (in 1815), between the Serampore missionaries (Carey, Marshman, and Ward), and the committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, and issued in their acting for some time as separate bodies. It was not till Dr. Marshman's arrival in England (in 1826), that Mr. Foster took a particular interest in the business. Previously,\* according to his own candid avowal, he had shared in the prejudices that had been gradually prevailing against this member of the Serampore fraternity, and which had implicated, also, the character of the whole union. But the statements and explanations made by Dr. Marshman, convinced him that these prejudices were mostly founded on gross misrepresentations. This conviction was subsequently corroborated during Dr. M.'s sojourn under Mr. Foster's roof, which afforded ample opportunity for estimating his character, and of acquiring by the most free and unceremonious canvassing, a clear understanding of the facts (both leading and subordinate) of the case. Besides writing an introduction of seventy pages to Dr. Marshman's "Statement," Foster maintained an extensive correspondence on the subject, for the purpose of correcting erroneous impressions, or soliciting pecuniary aid.† In private intercourse with his friends, Serampore formed the principal topic of conversation, and with those of them whose views differed from his own, he held frequent and protracted debates.

If any explanation be thought necessary for thus noticing an occurrence on every account so much to be regretted, it may be observed, that the part taken by Mr. Foster was too decided and prominent to be passed over

\* Introductory Observations to Dr. Marshman's Statement, p. viii.

† "About the Serampore business I have elaborately written, chiefly for private communication and representation, east, west, north, and south, as much as would I am sure, make a large quarto volume in the modern style of printing."—*To the Editor, July 18, 1832.*

in silence; and there is good reason for believing, that he would have deemed it simply an act of justice to record in this memoir, his deliberate judgment in favour of men, whom he regarded (and whom posterity will regard) as among the most illustrious examples of Christian self-devotement. In writing to his early associate and friend, Mr. Fawcett, he says, "I must think I am tolerably informed on that matter,—for Dr. M. has been five or six weeks under this roof, as the most quiet seclusion he could find, while preparing for the press a work in explanation and vindication. I had seen a great deal of him before the daily communications of these recent weeks, during which I have become acquainted, I think, with all that is material in the state of the case. I have heard, I believe, from one quarter and another, including the papers in the magazines, most of what is said, or can be said, on the other side. All manner of questions, hundreds of them, have been put to him, without the least reserve, down to the most minute circumstances, and he is quite freely communicative in all things whatever. After this I should not think it worth while to answer any one who should tell me that I am imposed on by Dr. M.'s artifice, evasion, &c. But, he has no such quality about him,—and he *needs* no craft or concealment; for I believe there is not in Christendom a man more highly and uniformly conscientious, a man more anxiously and scrupulously solicitous to do right in all things. I have no doubt that you will be in a *great degree* of the same opinion after you shall have read his next publication; but no representations in writing, in which a vast number of illustrative and confirmatory small particulars must necessarily be left out, can give the impression so completely as the intimate personal intercourse during many scores of hours, in which all the characteristic minutiae, down to the very smallest details of the course

of conduct, are naturally and inevitably brought in sight and discussion. There has not been, I am confident, one single particular, of the very smallest importance in the Serampore system, or in Dr. M.'s own conduct, that has not been freely talked over while he has been in this house. Many things he has mentioned, which, he has observed in the particular instances, he had never thought of mentioning, or had never deemed worth mentioning to any other person. And judging from this ample and minute disclosure, challenged and questioned and traversed at every point, and with a constant reference to all the animadversions circulated in report and in print,—judging upon this large and criticised explanation, I am convinced that the whole system and conduct at Serampore (and of Marshman *quite* as much as of Carey and Ward), has exhibited a completeness of devotement, and exclusion of selfish purposes, an unanimity of co-operation, a simplicity of object, and an indefatigable industry, of which there is no equal or second example (in an *associated company* of persons) in these times;—and to which there has been hardly a superior in any other times. . . . In short, never were mortal men devoted, throughout, with more disinterested singleness of purpose, to a noble object. Mrs. Marshman has co-operated in completely the same spirit; and with very great pecuniary efficiency. And John Marshman. . . . has acted most generously and magnanimously. As early as the age of seventeen, he had opportunities and overtures for going into courses for making a fortune, which by this time he would have done, with less indefatigable exertion than he has devoted to the Christian service, to which he has wholly given another seventeen years or nearly so, and is now worth nothing.”\*

\* “It is of no use to make professions of impartiality. That indeed was not the state of mind in which I began to give a somewhat particular attention to the subject; as I have said near the beginning of these pages,



Other passages in Foster's correspondence will show, that the high estimate he formed of Dr. Marshman, as a Christian and a missionary, was not influenced by any remarkable congeniality in their general mental habits and tastes, for in these they widely differed; it will also appear, that though his convictions in favour of the Serampore fraternity, as to the noble and disinterested spirit that animated them, and their strong claims on the gratitude

that I was very considerably prejudiced against Dr. M. till his free explanations on all points in question, led me to a conviction that gross calumny, that wanton and extravagant falsehood, was at work against him. It will be said, of course, that this went into a violent prejudice on the other side; I have to answer, that it was not, at any rate, such as to make me refuse attention to other statements or evidence. I listened to multifarious testimony and opinion against him, given with whatever force it could derive from the knowledge and acuteness of some of his most decided and able accusers. . . . In addition, I have seen a considerable number of private documents. The circumstances which happened to render my habitation the most convenient retirement for Dr. M., while digesting his statement, have brought me acquainted with very many particulars and developments relating to its subject, and with the character of the man himself. If any one should say, that I have been beguiled by polite dexterity and insinuating address, I should think it needless to make any other observation than that, whoever he may be that says so, he would make rather light of any one's opinion who should say that *he* could be duped in his judgment of the character of any man, with whom he should pass several months in daily and familiar intercourse, though it were Prince Metternich himself. Let due praise then be rendered to the modesty of such as, with very slight, or without the smallest, personal acquaintance with Dr. M., shall have an agreeable sense of infallibility in asserting that the judgment of one so intimately conversant with him is deluded. . . . Having in consequence of the local circumstances which brought me so directly in his way, been led to take an inquisitive interest in the concern in which he is involved, and having seen no appearance of a sustained and boldly uncompromising effort to assert his vindication, I have been induced by love of justice to do what I could in the capacity of advocate. What other motive can be ascribed or conceived for diverting so much time and attention from occupations for which they were greatly wanted? From what other motive could I be willing to incur, and that from persons with not one of whom I have ever had any manner of disagreement, a share, as I must submit to expect, of the animosity which will continue in action for a time against a man and a fraternity who were so long heretofore, and will remain ultimately and permanently hereafter, approved, admired and revered?"—*Introductory Observations to a Statement Relative to Serampore*, supplementary to a "Brief Memoir," by J. Marshman, D.D., London, 1828, pp. lxi. —lxi.

and support of the Christian public, remained unshaken to the last, he candidly allowed, that on some points his opinions were somewhat modified by the opposing statements. In 1837, a reunion was effected with the Baptist Missionary Society, a measure in which he did not acquiesce, though it relieved him from a very considerable expenditure of time and labour.

A great accession was made to Mr. Foster's sources of social enjoyment by the settlement of the Rev. W. Anderson in Bristol, as classical and mathematical tutor to the Baptist College, in 1825; and soon after, by the return of Mr. Hall to spend his last years in the scene of his early ministry. With the former his intercourse was frequent and cordial. As to Mr. Hall, Foster's letters abound with intimations of the vivid interest he took in the discourses and conversation of his great coeval.\* Notwithstanding their difference of opinion on the Serampore question, they were often in each other's society, and would have met much more frequently, had not Mr. Foster's state of health, and his distance from the city, prevented. It has been remarked, and apparently with truth, that the social circle was resorted to by Mr. Hall (in his later years at least), as a soothing relaxation, in which old associations and the scenes of past life were the favourite topics.

\* "Hall is still in our sort of circle the great primary object, to talk of and to hear talk, whether in his public or private positions. The progress of time but augments the evidence of the eminent value of our acquisition in Anderson, whether as tutor or conversational associate. He is your man *all round*. He is more intimate than any one else is with Hall, and measures his talents and qualities with mathematical precision."—*To B. Stokes, Esq., June 11, 1827.*

"Hall is supporting his uniform tenor of admirable preaching with a measure of usefulness, which, however, he sometimes regrets not to see more evident and direct. And one may justly wonder it should not partake more of the extraordinary, considering the superlative excellence of the ministration. But it will, it certainly *must*, have a most important effect on the rising race of educated and inquiring persons."—*To the Rev. T. Coles, May 1, 1829.*

Foster, on the other hand, valued it, though not exclusively, as a means of mental excitement, and enjoyed (unless physically disabled) "a long stout evening's talk," in which was duly intermingled the "animated No." On the occasion of Mr. Hall's decease, no one had a deeper sense than Mr. Foster of the irreparable loss sustained by that event; it was "a sense," to use his own expressive language, "of privation partaking of desolateness." "That memory," he said, "will never vanish from the minds of those who have heard his preaching, and frequently his conversation, during the five years that he has been resident here. As a preacher his like or equal will come no more."\* "The chasm he has left can never be filled. The thing to deplore is, that he did not fill a space which he was beyond all men qualified to occupy in our religious literature. It is with deep regret one thinks what an inestimable possession for our more cultivated, and our rising intelligent young people would have been some six or ten volumes of his sermons."† Instead of the funeral sermon which he declined (being under medical interdict at the time from all public speaking), he paid, in his "Observations on Mr. Hall as a Preacher," a tribute to his memory, which allowed a more ample and impartial application of his critical powers than would have been in harmony with the first emotions of sorrow. "In the composition business," he says, "I have made very poor work all this long time past with the little exception (exception I mean in point of industry merely—not successful industry) of the piece about the character of Hall as a preacher. It was on many accounts most reluctantly, that I consented to attempt that task, which I did not, till urged with the plea that to refuse will appear unfriendly to his memory. It proved a matter of difficulty

\* To John Easthope, Esq., March 3, 1831.

† To the Rev. John Fawcett, March 9, 1831.

and labour to excess, and was the work of several months, though it will not extend through more than about sixty pages in the printed book. There are parts of it, that will not please the indiscriminating admirers of the great preacher. The foresight that such must be the case, was one cause of my reluctance to the service.”\*

In 1829, Foster was invited to take part in the ordination of a minister over the congregation meeting in Swift's Alley, Dublin. His reply indicates, that his early antipathy to the formal and ceremonial in religion, had only been strengthened by advancing years. “In answer to this application,” he says, “while I feel it to be very friendly, and to do me more honour than I can justly claim, I have to make a very simple story:—namely, that I have been, I may say almost all my life, and still more in the latter part of it, in the uniform habit of ridiculing our Dissenters’ ordination, as a relic of the Hierarchy, which I have always intensely hated,—as a poor aping, among us who have *no* ecclesiastical institution, of a ceremony which has all manner of propriety (as consistent with the pretensions) in an established ecclesiastical order. It carries an appearance, and, though this be somewhat reservedly avowed, it makes, and is understood to make, a sort of pretension, of conferring some kind of *speciality* of fitness, qualification, and authorization, to perform the duties of a Christian minister. There is a notion that the ceremony creates something more, and something more effective and sacred, in the relation between him and the people, than could be contained in a serious deliberate engagement between them to accept each other in that relation. Now my wish would be, that every notion and practice of this kind, in short *everything sacerdotal and ceremonial, were cleared out of our religious economy.*

\* To B. Stokes, Esq., Dec. 19, 1831.

"This solemnity of ordination, partaking somewhat of a lingering superstition, has acquired of late years not a little of the ludicrous, from the frequency and facility with which, beyond former times, this supposed consecrated appointment and relation is dissolved—and off goes, or off is sent, the solemnly ordained minister and pastor, in quest of his fortune elsewhere.

"In saying all this, I beg you not to take me as if I were making any very grave matter of the thing—as if I fancied this little rag of hierarchy *infected with the plague*, and capable of infusing some mighty mischief into our religious constitution. I merely think it would better comport with good sense, and with religious simplicity as the dissenters' profession, to abandon such a ceremonial. I have acted on this opinion—or taste. In two places where in former years I have sustained the 'settled' ministerial office, I have declined, and with little difficulty or objection on the part of the people, all such formality of appointment. Several within my knowledge have done the same. Mr. Hall was never ordained, nor, as I have heard, Mr. Jay of Bath.\*

"But whether I be right or wrong in such an opinion or taste, or call it caprice or prejudice—it will be evident to you and Mr. Cross after such an explanation, that it would be quite *inconsistent*, almost ludicrously so, in me to take any part whatever in an ordination,—and to have it said that I even 'took a voyage,' 'went across the sea,' to officiate in such a transaction.

"I am glad to find you are likely to be agreeably united with a minister. . . . As to the affair of ordination, it may

\* "As to the report concerning myself which Mr. F. heard, it was groundless. I was ordained, and the service was published; I only deviated a little in the article of 'Confession,' substituting instead an address containing only some leading and general views of the gospel. As to Mr. Hall, he never was ordained; but one day, some years ago, when asked by a brother why he was not!—'Because, sir,' said he, 'I was a fool.'"—From the Rev. W. Jay, to the Editor, August 23, 1845.

very probably be, that the settled state of opinions among your people may render such a ceremony indispensable to a satisfactory pastoral relation. I retain interest enough for the station in Swift's Alley (where I once so little did my duty in capacity of minister for a little while), to wish very cordially that it may at length be favoured with some religious prosperity." \*

In the same letter, Foster adverts to the measure of Catholic emancipation, which had just been recommended in the king's speech at the opening of parliament (Feb. 5). "All the friends of political improvement here," he says, "are in sympathy with the exhilarated feelings you express in anticipation of the grand change of measures respecting Ireland. At the same time we are still in some fear lest the prodigious excitement in opposition throughout this country should have the effect of cribbing and narrowing the enactment in its passage through the legislature. The affair is now brought forward on its best and strongest ground of *policy* and imperious necessity—the bare, dry, abstract question of *right*, being reduced to a trifle in so portentous a crisis. The Catholic claim, as a matter of *pure right*, (under the name of liberty of conscience), has always appeared to me a little dubious; considering the treacherous, and in all ways detestable, quality of popery; but it has constantly appeared to me most perverse and contemptible to stickle about this, as a competent ground of refusal, in the face of an infinitely urgent interest of national safety and improvement."

To another friend, shortly after the Relief Bill had passed, he writes, "It is a very grand thing that these people have been doing for the national welfare; and the more gratifying for having come with surprising suddenness, and contrary to all that had been expected from the predominant movers

\* To John Purser, jun. Esq., Feb. 21, 1829.

of the exploit. It is a curious and memorable circumstance, that a measure which could not, in all probability, have been effected by a completely united ministry of whigs and liberals (had that been a possible composition of it), has been resolutely carried by a set of men avowedly opposed to liberalism, and opposed till lately to this very measure itself. One cannot but deem this a very signal interposition of the Divine Providence in favour of the nation. It is a less worthy feeling, but a feeling which one cannot help thinking one's self tolerably right in indulging, to exult in the overwhelming mortification thus inflicted on the whole proud, bigoted tribe of opposers of all improvement and beneficial innovation. They are (here in Bristol pre-eminently) amazed, and stunned, and astounded, almost out of their senses, to see the thing not only done, but done with a high hand by their *own set*,—the high tories, their very idols, the high church-and-state standard men,—and done in direct and cool contempt of all their loud and general remonstrances. And it is such a dashing and prodigious kick at '*the wisdom of our ancestors*' as seems to threaten unmeasured hazard to everything else that has been under the sacred protection of that venerable and inviolable superstition. Those narrow-minded *evangelicals in the Church* have had their special share in the mortification by seeing *among the bishops*, those very men on whose acquisition to the bench they have been congratulating themselves and the Church, declaring for this wicked innovation—Ryder, the two Sumners, and Copleston. Within our time, and a much longer period, there has never been any thing comparable to this great red-coat Minister for hewing away the old venerable boundaries of prescription and exclusion. As to what he may do in the sequel, one dare not be sanguine. There are Portugal and the seat of Mahommedanism, and West India slavery, and the East India Monopoly, and the wretched class of abuses in law,

and the corn-laws, and taxation. I am afraid there is no betting on him for half of these, not to name such a thing as parliamentary reform, or any proceeding affecting the Church property in Ireland.

“As to that same Church establishment, its superstitious adherents must be liable, one thinks, to some unwelcome intrusions of feeling, from the fact that now a decided, unquestionable majority of the people in the kingdom are recognized *dissenters*, in full possession of their civil and political rights and capacities,—the papist portion of them hating *that* establishment, and the protestant portion of them (such as are dissenters on principle) disapproving all secular religious establishments,—and with palpable evidence that *practical* dissent is progressive in a continually and rapidly augmenting ratio. This cannot but appear a bad and threatening predicament for the Church to have come into, with an absolute helplessness for getting out of it. This will continually lessen *the value of the Church to the State* as a political engine,—as a formerly powerful means of influence over the people. The state will come by degrees to consider whether the diminishing service which the Church can render it be *worth the cost*. And when *that* consideration comes to operate, it will be discovered that the State is no very *religious* animal.

“At all events, it is inexpressibly gratifying, on the ground of religion, philanthropy, and all views of improvement, to observe the prominent characteristic of our times—a *mobility*, a tendency to alteration, a shaking, and cracking, and breaking up of the old condition of notions and things,—an exploding of the principle, that things are to be maintained *because* they are ancient and established. Even that venerable humbug, called ‘our admirable *Constitution*,’\* has suffered woful assault and battery by this

\* “Of one thing I am clear, that if ever this Constitution be destroyed, it will be only when it ought to be destroyed; when evils long neglected,



recent transaction. This thing, the 'Constitution,' has been commonly regarded and talked and written of (and was so talked of by the opposition in the late debates), as if it were something almost of *divine origin*, as if it had been delivered like the Law from the Mount, as a thing perfect, permanent, sacred, and inviolable. But now we have it practically shown that one of its corners may be demolished without ceremony—Holy Temple though it has been accounted—when the benefit of the community requires an innovation,—and, therefore, so may any other corner or portion of it, when the same cause shall demand. In *this special view* the late measure appears to me of incalculable importance. It now becomes a principle recognized that ANY innovation may be made when justice and policy require it. It is true that great pains were taken by some of the advocates to maintain that it was *not* a violation of said thing—'Constitution.' But I willingly accept Mr. Peel's description of it as '*a breaking in upon the constitution.*'\* To think of all the nauseous cant there has been about the 'constitution,' whenever any old established evil has been proposed to be corrected or abolished!"†

The introduction of the Reform Bill (March 1, 1831) opened a prospect of political amelioration, which Foster

and good long omitted, will have brought things to such a state, that the Constitution must fall to save the Commonwealth, and the Church of England perish for the sake of the Church of Christ. Search and look whether you can find that any Constitution was ever destroyed from within by factions or discontent, without its destruction having been, either just penalty or necessary, because it could not any longer answer its proper purposes."—DR. ARNOLD, *Life and Correspondence*, Vol. I., p. 409.

\* "Mr. Peel, who is rather remarkable for groundless and unlucky concessions, owned that the late Act broke in on the Constitution of 1688; whilst in 1689, a very imposing minority of the then House of Lords, with a decisive majority in the lower House of Convocation, denounced this very Constitution of 1688, as breaking in on the English Constitution."—COLERIDGE, *On the Constitution of the Church and State, according to the idea of each*, 3rd edition, p. 18.

† To B. Stokes, Esq., April 30, 1829.

"had not the slightest expectation of living to see." "Are you, I wonder," he writes (before hearing the issue of the debate previous to the first reading),\* as some of us are here, in fear of the result? Still I hope that there has been success thus far—by this time the great preliminary question has been decided; we shall wait (you are *not* waiting) with extreme anxiety to hear *how*. But even if it has been decided right, there is still a fearful trial further on, where one sees in firm array, and with desperately resolute aspect, the whole mass and strength of inveterate corruption, and aristocratic power. With that huge combination of corruption, it is 'now or never;' and I shall be delightfully disappointed if its resistance do not prove *substantially*, though not wholly, successful. My fear is, that the proud aristocracy are so besotted as not to understand the signs of the times; as not to see, that if they do not concede, they will put all to ultimate hazard,—I mean, *for their own interests*. They have been so long accustomed, and with complete impunity, to despise the people, under the name and character of the 'lower orders,' 'the mob,' and so forth, and to indulge and express their scorn of any thing that miserable 'many-headed beast' can do against them, that it is vastly difficult for them to admit any conviction or fear about the matter.

"It is not for this country only, but for other nations, for Europe, that one fearfully contemplates this juncture of our affairs. Should the present ministry and projected reform fail, who shall insure us against becoming again involved in a general war for despotism against liberty,—ruining ourselves to ruin the cause of justice and the people all over the continent? The scene and prospects are dark and portentous there. All unquiet in the gigantic *republic* (it is little else) of France; all perverse and ill-starred in

\* To John Easthope, Esq., March 9, 1831.

Belgium ; the despots all in a fever of rage, and eagerness, if they dare, to be in action ; and too probably Warsaw by this time in a state of blood, and sack, and desolation, to be followed up by all the rigours of revenge and aggravated tyranny over the whole people ; while there is no power to interfere to turn that revenge, in fire and brimstone, on the barbarian oppressor.

“ The only consolation is, that there is a Sovereign Power reigning over all. *That* consolation, however, is mingled with the gloom of knowing that the supreme Governor has a controversy, a fearful account to settle, with *all* the nations for their impiety and wickedness. So that it is but too sadly probable there are ‘vials of wrath’ to be poured out on them all, before happier times shall come—that is to say, before they are worthy or fit for such times.’

The return of so vast a majority in favour of the bill at the general election in 1831, was hastily deemed by many, to be the death-blow of toryism, and even Foster indulged expectations of the triumphant progress of liberal principles, which a calm review of the state of the conflicting parties not long after convinced him were far too sanguine. It is interesting to contrast the bright vision of political optimism which his ardent imagination created at this crisis, with the sombre views he generally entertained. “ It would be doing no good,” he says,\* “ if I could communicate any share of the elated wild-fire spirits with which we have been half mad here, for you have quite enough of it, and more than enough already. . . . The result of the dissolution must have surpassed, I should think, the most sanguine dream that flattered the imaginations of the Ministry themselves. Is it not possible, if the very truth could be known, that some of them may be a little *frightened*

\* To John Easthope, Esq., M.P., May 21, 1831.

at their own success? For it is little better, as the opposition prints and orators are truly saying, day after day, than a triumph of plain radicalism; and Lord Grey is notoriously a high-toned aristocrat, and probably some of his titled associates are much of the same temper. But aristocracy is now dashed from its proud position, never to regain it. . . . Doubtless, our nobility, and commoners of rank and wealth, will continue to have weight and influence in our national affairs,—great enough in all reason; but it now appears to be quite secondary and subordinate, to the end of the chapter. This is what ~~we~~ wanted; but one should wonder if it can exactly please all those personages of high degree, who are concurring with apparent zeal, to accomplish this prodigious change. As to such a 'my lord' as he that is denominated Brougham and Vaux, I can imagine that he may not care. . . . he has something that mounts him proudly above title and all its stupid pomps; but as to many of those who are ostensibly to coincide with him in the present measures, will it not secretly aggrieve them to suffer a deduction of about fifty per cent. at a stroke from the practical value of their nobility?

. . . . "We may now look for what shall approach rather nearly to a *real representation of the people*; and it is evident enough that such a House of Commons will assume a lofty ascendancy over every other power in the State. . . . It will say, in menacing tone, 'My name is Legion, for we are many; we are in effect *the people*; we express their will and bear their authority. to which every other authority shall yield.'

"From this time forth, the ministry—*any* ministry that means to maintain place for three months, must act in conformity to the *national mind*. And to a ministry willing so to act a prodigious advantage is gained by this surprising change. They will no longer be harassed to dis-

traction by endless compromises to be adjusted; by the demands and menacing power of competitor factions; by the dictated conditions on which His Grace or Paul Benfield\* will give the support of his half-dozen or half-score of rotten boroughs; by the anxiety to distribute the wages of corruption in such a manner as to keep the business going on, and the system from going to pieces. A ministry will now be able, in the name and strength of the people, to defy the contrivances of intriguers, 'the influences *behind the throne*;' and the personal caprices and perversities there may be on the throne itself. Is Master William fully aware what he is doing for the *prerogative*, as it is named, of his successors on that seat of power? Perhaps he is, and is gratified to think that *he* has possessed and exerted a greater power than any of *them* will ever enjoy. It is not conceivable there can ever come a crisis in which a British monarch shall possess a power equal to the making such a prodigious dash as what he has *now* made.

\* "Paul Benfield is the grand parliamentary reformer, the reformer to whom the whole choir of reformers bow, and to whom even the right honourable gentleman himself must yield the palm; for what region in the empire, what city, what borough, what county, what tribunal in this kingdom is not full of his labours! . . . In order to station a steady phalanx for all future reforms, this public-spirited usurer, amidst his charitable toils for the relief of India, did not forget the poor rotten Constitution of his native country. For her, he did not disdain to stoop to the trade of a wholesale upholsterer for this house, to furnish it, not with the faded tapestry figures of antiquated merit, such as decorate and may reproach some other houses, but with real solid living patterns of true modern Virtue. Paul Benfield made (reckoning himself) no fewer than eight members in the last parliament. What copious streams of pure blood must he not have transfused into the veins of the present! But what is even more striking than the real services of this new-imported patriot, is his modesty. As soon as he had conferred the benefit on the Constitution, he withdrew himself from our applause. . . . Mr. Benfield was therefore no sooner elected than he set off for Madras, and defrauded the longing eyes of parliament. We have never enjoyed in this house the luxury of beholding that minion of the human race, and contemplating that visage which has so long reflected the happiness of nations."—BURKE'S *Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts*. Works, vol. iv. pp. 62, 63. (Lond. 1852.)

There can never again so much *depend* on the single will and determination of the crown. *He* might, for some time at least, have stood out against the national wishes and interest, abetting the aristocratic and boroughmonger party in a great degree, in defiance of the reforming spirit, retaining a Tory ministry supported by a corrupt parliament; but he has irrecoverably deprived the monarchy of all such power. . . . It will be high amusement to see 'the Bill' driving and forcing its way through the Lords, amidst the silent mortification of some, and ungovernable rage of others. That they absolutely *must* pass it, and dare not even presume to modify it, is now, I suppose, a matter beyond all question. But to think of the desperate fury of a large quantity of them!"

During the interval between the introduction and settlement of this great measure, the elation of his feelings had subsided, and he began to look with suspicion and anxiety on the efforts that would be made by the enemies of the popular cause, to nullify its efficiency. "You have it your own way at last," he says, "the thing is done; and I congratulate you. And now, what do you soberly and deliberately reckon on as the consequence, after the reform in your house shall have been carried into effect? The exultation and sanguine expectations of all around me, were putting me, last night, to look a little coolly at the prospect. And I confess the nearest and largest circumstance in it was not of the most pleasant aspect or colour, being no other than this—a protracted and deadly warfare between the two parties, probably resulting in still greater changes, and perhaps at length in some great catastrophe. It is unlikely that the aristocracy will have learnt any wisdom from their experience. Where, in all Europe, *have* their class learnt any thing from events which might have instructed all but stocks and stones?

The pride of our aristocracy (the proudest in the world), so desperately mortified, is not likely to subside into prudence and accommodation, but to work into rage, and a fierce systematic hostility against the ascendancy of the popular interest. And their means for this warfare are multifarious and formidable: \* their vast wealth, their consequent local influence, their widely pervading connexion with the church, the army, the law, the magistracy, and every shape of authority and institution in the whole country; their insertion into the edge (so to speak) of the highest part of what should be the democratic body, the great number of them, and those immediately next to them, that will come into the new House of Commons—the accomplished education and proficiency of their old leaders in every sort of statecraft, intrigue, and collusion—a court (king included probably) desperately and incorrigibly tenacious of the old system—the earnest favour of all the ‘great powers,’ as they are called, except France; and France perhaps going to terrify all the world again with the excesses of democracy,—all this, I confess, forebodes to me any thing rather than a quiet course of events and improvement in this country.

“And then the reforming ministry, with a reformed House of Commons,—they will soon lose the favour of the people, and so be left bare to the unrelenting siege of their mortal enemies, if they do not dare and accomplish some grand exploits of almost revolutionary change. Think of *Ireland*,—the state of the poor—the load of taxation—the navigation laws—the East India and West India affairs—the municipal police—the *Church*—the foreign relations (Portugal, &c.)—the whole hideous chaos of the law—not

\* “The late extraordinary revolution has shown the enormous strength of the aristocracy, and of the corrupt and low tory party, one sees clearly what hard blows they will not only stand but require, and that the fear of depressing them too much is chimerical.”—DR. ARNOLD, *Life and Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 409.

to name the banking system and various other matters. These will require a series of the boldest measures that ever statesmen ventured. *Will* Lord Grey's ministry (or whoever else shall constitute the ministry) venture such daring and radical measures? or be able to carry them through parliament, if they do venture, in the face of the combined, dogged opposition of an aristocracy co-operating with other interests also, besides the purely aristocratic, in employing every possible expedient of frustration?

"But if the reformed legislature shall fail to accomplish some grand changes, and so disappoint the people, *what then?* . . . . How deadly bitter must be the mortification of the aristocracy at the present moment; to think that just twenty-four months since, one-fifth part voluntarily conceded of the reform now forced from them, would have made them grand favourites of the people, and established them in almost undisputed power for many years to come! Still, I have no faith that even *this* infliction on their infatuation will convert them to a different course of policy. Do tell me whether your anticipations correspond to those I have been expressing, or whether yours are bright and placid."\*

The preceding extracts show the deep interest Foster took in political subjects; but it would be very erroneous to infer from the vehemence of his expressions, that he was influenced by the spirit of party. To do him justice, it is necessary to take into account his exalted idea of human life. Habituated to view it in its highest relations, under its moral aspect and as connected with its future destiny, he contemplated the general tenor of men's pursuits with profound regret. For the mass of the people he was ready to make large allowances; the consumption of their time in unintermitting toil, in numberless cases their physical

\* To John Easthope, Esq. M.P., June 12, 1832.



destitution, and still more their intellectual and moral depression, excited his deepest sympathy. But when he beheld the higher ranks bartering their prerogatives of birth, education, wealth, and power, for personal aggrandisement or selfish indulgences, in disregard or violation of the well-being of the multitudes below them, his feelings were often tinctured with an indignant acerbity.\* He considered that towards delinquents of this class leniency was not permitted; for weighing *their* misdeeds, the balances ought to be hung with the utmost nicety; they were to be tried in accordance with their rank. Statesmen and legislators could not complain, that by his adjudication they were placed "on the low level of the inglorious throng." Far from it; "to whom much is given of him shall be much required, and to whom men have committed much of him they will ask the more," was the rule which he applied with a stern severity.† How high he placed the standard of

\* "As I feel that of the two besetting sins of human nature, selfish neglect and selfish agitation, the former is the more common, and has in the long run done far more harm than the latter, although the outbreaks of the latter while they last are of a far more atrocious character, so I have in a manner vowed to myself and prayed that with God's blessing, no excesses of popular wickedness, though I should be myself, as I expect, the victim of them, no temporary evils produced by revolution, shall ever make me forget the wickedness of toryism, of that spirit which has throughout the long experience of all history continually thwarted the cause of God and goodness, and has gone on abusing its opportunities and heaping up wrath by a long series of selfish neglect against the day of wrath and judgment."

—DR. ARNOLD, *Life and Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 352.

† "It is vastly reasonable to be requiring lenient judgments on the conduct, and respectful sympathy for the feelings of public men, while we see with what a violent passion, power and station are sought, with what desperate grappling claws of iron they are retained, and with what grief and mortification they are lost. It might be quite time enough, we should think, to commence this strain of tenderness, when in order to fill the places of power and emolument it has become necessary to drag by force retiring virtue and modest talent from private life, and to retain them in those situations by the same compulsion, in spite of the most earnest wishes to retreat, excited by delicacy of conscience, and a disgust at the pomp of state. So long as men are pressing as urgently into the avenues

character for public men, and how little he allowed his admiration of transcendent abilities and coincidence on several great questions to warp his judgment and induce a

of place and power, as ever the genteel rabble of the metropolis have pushed and crowded into the play-house to see the new actor, and so long as a most violent conflict is maintained between those who are in power, and those who want to supplant them, we think statesmen form by eminence the class of persons to whose characters both the contemporary examiner and the historian are not only authorised, but in duty bound, to administer justice in its utmost rigour, without one particle of extenuation. While forcing their way toward office in the state, and while maintaining the possession once acquired, they are apprised, or might and should be apprised, of the nature of the responsibility, and it is certain they are extremely well apprised of the privileges. They know that the public welfare depends, in too great a degree, on their conduct, and that the people have a natural instinctive prejudice in favour of their leaders, and are disposed to confide to the utmost extent. They know that a measure of impunity, unfortunate for the public, is enjoyed by statesmen, their very station affording the means both of concealment and defence for their delinquencies. They know that in point of emolument they are more than paid from the labours of the people for any services they render; and that they are not bestowing any particular favour on the country by holding their offices, as there are plenty of men, almost as able and good as themselves, ready to take their places, if they would abdicate them. When to all this is added the acknowledged fact, that the majority of this class of men have trifled with their high responsibility, and taken criminal advantage of their privileges, we can have no patience to hear of any claim for a special indulgence of charity, in reading and judging the actions of statesmen.

"On the ground of morality in the abstract, separately from any consideration of the effect of his representations, the biographer of statesmen is bound to a very strict application of the rules of justice, since these men constitute, or at least belong to, the uppermost class of the inhabitants of the earth. They have stronger inducements arising from their situation, than other men, to be solicitous for the rectitude of their conduct, their station has the utmost advantage for commanding the assistance of whatever illumination a country contains; they see on the large scale, the effect of all the grand principles of action; they make laws for the rest of mankind, and they direct the execution of justice. If the eternal laws of morality are to be applied with a soft and lenient hand in the trial and judgment of such an order of men, it will not be worth while to apply them at all to the subordinate classes of mankind; as a morality that exacts but little where the means and the responsibility are the greatest, would betray itself to contempt by pretending to sit in solemn judgment on the humbler subjects of its authority. The laws of morality should operate, like those of nature, in the most palpable manner on the largest substances."—*Contributions, &c. to the Eclectic Review*, Vol. I. pp. 225, 227. *Review of Macdiamid's Lives of British Statesmen*. October and November, 1808.

more favourable verdict, is shown in his review of Fox's Historical Work.\*

The views he adopted of the great social relations, were sustained by the natural strength of his character, and nourished by meditation in a life of comparative seclusion. Had he taken an active part (uncongenial as that would have been to some of his constitutional tendencies) in practical politics, instead of watching the strife of parties and the collision of interests, through "the loop-holes of retreat," he might have seen reason for curbing his impatience at the slow progress of improvement, and have found some compensation for a less rapid advance than suited his ardent aspirations, in the greater security with which, amidst the intricacies of modern society, the requisite changes are effected.

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## LETTERS.

CXLII. TO J. B. WILLIAMS, ESQ.†

April 20, 1827.

DEAR SIR,—I am, or ought to be, ashamed to think how long it is since our friend Mr. H. offered me whatever should be the first opportunity in his communications with your part of the country, for the conveyance of a line to you, in acknowledgment of your highly acceptable and valuable present of a copy of your life of P. Henry—a book which, in addition to its intrinsic value, and to the kindness of the presenter, has the grace of so very elegant an exterior. I beg you to believe, that this ill-looking lateness of acknowledgment, from one who is procrastination all over, in all things and times, has in real truth nothing to do with the sincerity of the thanks which I request you to accept.

Your many curious and interesting additions to the work,

\* See also his review of *the Characters of Fox*, *ECLECTIC REVIEW*, December, 1809.

† Now Sir J. B. Williams, Knight, the Hall, Wem.

have rendered it far more valuable than it was before, especially in connecting its subject, by so many remarkable points, *with those times* as to make it greatly more illustrative of them. While, as intimately present with the immediate family, the reader is made to see much more of what was doing or suffering by that illustrious fraternity, to which, by the character of their piety and zeal, they belonged.—Very curious too are the various notices which may be considered as simply antiquarian. And the very copious *index* puts every part of the contents at the reader's use.

I am willing to believe that the *labour* has been a *pleasure* to you; else I should feel something very like a *commiserating* sympathy; for the industry must have been very great and protracted. Unthinking readers are little aware what it has cost an author or editor, to arrange and elucidate a multitude of particulars involved in the obscurity, perplexity, and scattered variety of authorities, of the history of a distant age. As to some departments of history and biography, I never can bring myself to feel that it is worth while to undergo all this labour; but with respect to *that noble race of saints*, of which the world will never see the like again (for in the *millennium* good men will not be formed and sublimed amidst persecution), it is difficult to say *what* degree of minute investigation is too much,—especially in an age in which it is the fashion to misrepresent and decry them.

The *portraits*, besides being what may be believed individual likenesses, form a very *characteristic* addition to the work, as being so strikingly *puritanical*, not only in attire, but in the very cast and character of their looks. That is to say, one cannot help feeling that they look somehow different from what the very same countenances would have done if Mr. and Mrs. Henry had *not* been puritans,—more unworldly, more honest, more calmly firm, more absolutely good.

I trust that both the editor and the readers will be better for the more intimate acquaintance with them obtained through these researches and illustrations. I do not know what may be argued as to the extent of circulation; but if we may believe that the reprints of religious books of the former age obtain a fair proportion of readers, there ought to be a favourable probability for a book of the same class when brought out in so greatly improved a state.

Wishing you health, and every good of the still higher order,

I am, dear Sir,

Yours, very respectfully,

J. FOSTER.

CXLII. TO JOHN EASTHOPE, ESQ. M.P.

*Stapleton, May 23, 1827.*

.... I reckon our London *noncon.* people of all sorts and classes will be often at you for the favour of your name, now that it can exempt their country friends from one item in their taxation. You will find that there are more Dissenters that have been taught to *write* than you had ever dreamed of.

.... How does the new elevation seem to agree with you? Does the lofty character of a legislator, a senator of Great Britain, a member of that Assembly where all the wisdom and virtue of a great nation is presumed to be concentrated—does it sit on you easily and gracefully? .... I own I am sorry you are there,—from an apprehension of more evil befalling yourself than can be countervailed by the good which, as an individual, you can render to the nation. I could not help being pleased that you beat the rascals at St. Albans, but sorry there could not have been some better reward than a seat among no better men in St. Stephen's. .... But, on *which side* of the House\* have you taken that seat? If on the *right* side, how very queer you must feel your situation,—having gone into the House in the expectation of being in endless battle array against that fortress of power, and any gang that was likely ever to garrison it. You must feel a sad quenching of that fine ferocity with which you were prepared to stand to your gun

\* "The Commons' House will doubtless be a far better thing than the old one—a miserable hole when I was in its vile gallery, on my feet about eighteen hours together, once on a time, when Pitt and Fox were on the opposite sides of the table."—*Mr. Foster to Sir John Easthope, Oct. 23, 1834.*

on the assailants' battery. Can you be perfectly free from all suspicion that there is some shrewd turn of the *Black Art* in the case, when you, the whole tribe of you, patriots, reformers, democrats, and what not, find yourselves suddenly transported through the air, from your warlike position, in *front* of Canning, to a station of alliance and fighting co-operation beside him and behind him,—while he has not made so much as a hypocritical profession of any change of principles or measures? The riddance of a good quantity of the most rotten aristocracy from the administration is plainly enough a good thing, so far. But we folks, who are at a great distance from the grand central monopoly of wisdom, and therefore of slow and obtuse intellects, cannot well comprehend this zealous coalition of the avowed enemies of all corruption with a minister who has been, through all times and seasons, its friend and defender,—and more than so, fairly tells them, as if in easy scorn of their gullibility, that he will continue in his old course, explicitly scouting beforehand their parliamentary reform, their attempts in behalf of the Dissenters, and all that. To *us* it would really seem that this novel and odd sort of league is made at the sole expense of what had been thought the wiser and better-meaning party; and that the reformers, economizers, &c., are consenting to forego all their best projects, and even principles, for the honour of being denominated . . . . "his honourable friends." The *nation*, truly, is to be a mighty gainer by this famous compact.

"But Catholic Emancipation! Catholic Emancipation!" Why, yes,—very well so far, if that, even so much as *that*, were in any likelihood to be effected; but this worthy Minister has consented to abandon even that to its feeble and remote chance. For, as left to its own shifts, what chance has it in "the Lords?"

But even supposing this most virtuous and patriotic Minister, backed by his scores of converts and new friends, could, would, and did, carry this measure what then? Will he alleviate the oppressive burdens of the country? Will he cut down the profligate and enormous expenditure of the government? Will he bring any of the detestable public delinquents to justice? Will he blow up a single

rotten borough? Will he rout out that infernal Court of Chancery? Will he do anything toward creating an effective police through the country, every part of which is, every night, in complete exposure to attacks of plunderers and ruffians? Or (to glance abroad) will he do anything for *Greece*, or anything to real, effectual purpose, for what is cantly named the Peninsula? Nay, will he do anything at last for even amendment of the West Indies, which he has palavered so much about? No, nothing of all this. So that the good of having got this same admirable Prime Minister consists in—the good he will not do!—

To revert to Catholic Emancipation (I hate that "*Catholic*,"—"popery," and "*popish*," were the more proper words with our worthy ancestors), but, Catholic Emancipation. Well; if I were on your bench, or *any* bench in the House, I should most zealously vote for that measure; but with a very different cast of feeling from what seems to prevail among its advocates in that House. They will have it that Popery, that infernal pest, is now become (if it ever was otherwise) a very tolerably good and harmless thing—no intolerance or malignity about it now—liberalized by the illuminated age—the popish priests the worthiest, most amiable, most useful of men. Nay, popery is just as good as any other religion, except some small preference for our "National Establishment." Nothing so impertinent, nothing so much to be deprecated and condemned, as the idle and mischievous fanaticism of attempting to convert papists to protestantism. To hear some of your wise men talk in that house, one would think that the *Reformation*, some centuries back, had been almost a needless thing. "Don't be so silly and methodistical as to cant about the restoration of the Christian Religion to its simplicity and purity. The popish church are just as good Christians as any of yourselves can be. And as to their claim to an entire equality of civil privileges, it has not the slightest speck of reasonable doubt upon it."

Now, my dear Sir, is not all this most infamous? Does any sensible man honestly doubt whether popery be intrinsically of the very same spirit that it ever was! Does any mortal doubt, whether, if it *were* ever to regain an ascendancy of power, an uncontrolled dominion in this country

it would reveal the fiend, and again revel in persecution? When did ever the Romish Church disavow, in the face of the world, any of its former principles, revoke any of its odious decrees, or even censure any of the execrable abominations, the burnings, the tortures, the massacres, the impostures, perpetrated under its authority? And look at its zealots, even in Ireland; what is the spirit of its partizans? what is the language of its Doyle and Co.?

If I had to preface a vote in the "House" with a sentence or two, it would be to this effect:—"I would urge this measure most earnestly; not that I can profess to feel this demand strongly grounded on a strict claim of *right*; for I believe there is essentially and inseparably in popery, something of deadly tendency to the welfare of a state. *That* point, however, I deem not worth debating in the present case, where the measure comes with such an overpowering claim of *policy*, of *expediency*, of *utility*. Without adopting this measure, you absolutely *can never tranquillize the people of Ireland*. And to have Ireland continuing in the condition in which it *will* otherwise continue, is an evil and a danger so tremendous, that any possible evil to be apprehended from the emancipation is reduced to an utter trifle in the comparison. But *what* evil, *what* danger can there be to apprehend from the emancipation? Are you so dreaming, or so lunatic, as to fancy it possible that popery, whatever civil privileges were given it, can ever acquire an ascendancy, or even any material power, in the British state? What!! popery attain to an overawing power, in spite of the rapidly augmenting knowledge and intelligence of the people—the almost miraculous diffusion of the Bible—the spirit of licence, and fearless discussion of all subjects—the extension of religion, and of dissent from all hierarchies—with the settled, deep, and general prejudice against popery into the bargain—and the wealth, power, rank, and influence, nine-tenth parts of them, on the side of protestantism? How *can* you keep your countenances, how can you help laughing outright, while you are pretending to entertain any such apprehensions?"

But what presumption it is, for a sinner in an obscure country garret, to be writing opinions about state matters to a sinner in the "*Imperial Parliament*!"



My dear sir, believe me to remain most cordially your old friend, and, I should *now* add, *humble servant*,

J. FOSTER.

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CXLIII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, June 22, 1827.*

. . . . I went to pass a week or two with an old friend and relation, a physician, in order to take his advice about anything remedial or palliative for the habitual weakness and frequent painful sensations of my eyes, which are failing sadly.—It often occurs to my thoughts how my John, and your James, are quit of all these mortal infirmities, grievances, and apprehensions; no longer involved in the frailty of our animated, endangered, and perishing clay; no longer dependent for their knowledge, their activity, their enjoyments, on these organs of matter; no longer having their “foundation in the dust.” But *we* shall not long stay behind; we, too, are fast advancing toward a separation from all these elements; let us hope and sedulously prepare to meet again in a nobler economy those who have already arrived there, and have carried our affections with them.

. . . . I have just declined from conscious necessity and duty, on several accounts, a journey of three weeks through North Wales, with a little party of friends at Worcester, who kindly *solicited* me to take a seat in a young lady’s elegant one horse vehicle, herself the driver. Snowdon! the grand chain bridge! romantic valleys, cataracts, castles, and all the rest! It would truly have been a vast luxury. But, under the veto of ever so many causes combined, I am to see none of those things; some of which I *did* see about fifteen years since, in company with the person who is to be the leader in this new expedition,—and who tells me he has never since had an opportunity of inviting me under such favourable circumstances to renew the adventure, and thinks very improbable he ever may again. He is an admirable guide, and I am enthusiastic with respect to that enchanted region; but old Conscience said “no,”—in con-

sideration of good wife's unfortunate health and imprisonment at home in this dingy place—of studious work, sadly neglected, though promised to be done long since—of the expense of such luxury; and all this corroborated by a rheumatic affection of my back, which, were it to continue or become worse, would disable me for the climbing of mountains for the purpose of seeing the panorama.

. . . . I have the 'most unwelcome task before me of preaching in substitution for Hall on Sunday evening; he having consented very reluctantly to go to London to preach two sermons for the benefit of our Bristol Academy.

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OXLIV. TO JOHN PURSER, SEN., ESQ.

*Stapleton, 1827.*

Unless Mr. Evans, who kindly offers to convey this, shall happen to name the writer, it will appear to you as from the hand of a perfect stranger. Nor can I be sure you will not say that the case might just as well have been actually so, for any interest you can now feel in recalling to mind that you did once know such a person as J. Foster.

One has, on some occasions in the long course of life, felt one could say, with perfect consciousness of truth, what one could not reasonably *expect* to be believed—all appearances being so directly to the contrary. The present is such a one; so that I shall have no just cause to complain, if my declaration be not believed that, ever since I left Ireland to this hour, I have retained a very grateful remembrance of my old friend, Mr. Purser, and of his family; concerning whom I have inquired and heard at intervals, from various persons that I have met with through the long period of more than *thirty years*.

It would be a vain attempt to explain (and indeed I may justly suppose you would not at all care about any explanation) how then it could have happened, that I never, in any instance, gave any token of such regard as I am professing to have constantly felt. Having always been *intending* to write to you, and not *long* to delay doing so, I have sometimes thought there was some kind of spell or fatality in

the case. In truth, there is a certain strange power or tendency in delay to prolong and perpetuate itself. And after it has continued a considerable time, perhaps several years, there comes a feeling that the matter of *character* is now quite a lost thing, and that therefore the case can become no worse. Something partly similar has happened with respect to one or two early friends in this country, still living, held always in friendly remembrance, never visited in the remote places of their abode, and their last letters, of a date indefinitely far in the past, remaining unanswered. But this case respecting my two Irish friends (the senior and the junior), is by much the worst in my long but unimportant history. The mortification it causes me is such that I could almost wish to be able to introduce myself, *not* as an ancient friend, little deserving to be remembered as such,—but as a person who has just been very much interested in hearing a particular account of you from a lady whose sister has been with you within the last year, and who gave such an account of you that I thought I should have been much gratified to be acquainted with such a family. It recalled to my imagination, once again, with a vivid freshness, the interesting social scenes and circumstances of a period lying on the *ascent* of life, on the other side, as it were, of a mountain which I have long since passed over, and am now descending, as my old friend also is, far down toward the low last tract of life. But the images so revived (which, however, have never faded), were in strong contrast, in many essential points, with those presented by the description of what I should find if I were in the same scene again. One important and estimable member of the family removed from the world; a younger one long since grown up, and placed in family relations far off from you; another, once my young friend and pupil, now in middle age, *doubly* a family man, and active in a sphere of business and various cares,—all this is so vastly different from the picture in my mind, that I have no power of thought to pass the one into the other, so as to realize this later form of the scene to my imagination. . . .

As to myself, you are not likely to have heard anything scarcely of the course of my life, marked by none but common occurrences. Since I saw Ireland I have spent

several years in some, and many years in other parts of England; in Sussex, near London, near Bristol, at Frome, at a remote place high up in Gloucestershire, and lastly, near ten years again near Bristol, to which last place I have always retained a partiality ever since I was at the academy there in my youth. In two of these places of residence I was for a considerable time a settled preacher, as we call it,—at one of them, at two periods distant from each other; but in each instance was compelled to give in, by some kind of debility in the parts about the throat, which rendered the constantly recurring exercise of public speaking difficult and painful. Always, however, up to this time, I have continued to preach occasionally. Just twenty years I have been a married man, with great cause to be happy in that connection. . . . We have two daughters, our only surviving children; a son, who would have been now eighteen, died last year of consumption. I have great reason to be pleased at having had my lot cast, temporarily, in a variety of situations, though with no very remarkable events in any of them; since this has given me the opportunity and advantage of seeing more of the nature of things and men, than I might if fixed during the main part of life in one place. I am now in the fifty-eighth year, and feel very sensible monitions of approach to old age, especially in the decay of sight, and something in that of memory. . . .

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OKLV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*September, 1827.*

. . . . I have cause to sympathize with your emotions in remembrance of one whom you see on earth no more; it being this week of last year that I resigned my only son. A day or two since, when left in solitude, I went up to an unoccupied room where a number of things that were his are put away; and opened once again, a box where various chemical articles remain exactly in the order in which his own hands placed them;—and thought of him as now in another world; with the questions rising again—Where? oh where?—In what manner of existence? Amidst what

scenes, and revelations, and society? With what remembrances of this world and of us whom he has left behind in it?—Questions so often breathed, but to which no voice replies. What a sense of wonder and mystery overpowers the mind,—to think that he who was here, whose last look, and words, and breath, I witnessed,—whose eyes I closed, whose remains are mouldering in the earth not far hence, should actually be now a conscious intelligence in another economy of the universe!—Such thoughts have numberless times come in solemn shade over *your* mind; but sometimes they have come in brightness. We have the delightful confidence that our departed sons have now infinitely the advantage of us; and that they are trusting in the divine mercy in Jesus Christ for us, that we shall one day reach their happy abodes, never again to suffer a separation. And now a year has been taken from the diminishing interval between our losing them in death, and recovering them, I trust, in immortality.

It is an all-wise and all-gracious Power that presides over the appointment of those who remain to us. Not less in wisdom and goodness will it be, *if* he shall withdraw from us yet another, or another of those who remain to us. Nevertheless, I will hope that such a visitation is not approaching you. I should be gratified to hear that the one you are at present so anxiously watching for is recovering to a less endangered state.

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CXLVI. TO BENJAMIN STOKES, ESQ.

March 10, 1828.

There seems to be a gloomy shade hovering over my mind since I received W——'s letter on Saturday. The image, as now lifeless, of the man that I have so often seen in the highest health and spirits, is continually presenting itself. And many times, these two days, the social scenes of his house, where I have repeatedly been received in so very kind a manner, have come with vividness to my memory. The extreme suddenness seems almost to disable the mind to realize the fact in thought. The idea of his

moving rapidly on, in vigorous life, to a certain spot, to one precise point, and on coming exactly thither, being, as in a moment, in another world, renders the mystery of death still more intense. And there being nothing to excite the slightest anticipation, when he set out on the journey, when he came within a mile—within a few steps,—of the fatal point! How true the saying, that “in the midst of life we are in death!”

It must have been an almost overwhelming shock, which each of his near relations, but above all his wife, would feel on receiving the messenger or the letter that brought the sad information. W—— intimated an apprehension of serious danger to her, on account of a frail and sinking state of health. But I hope she will not be the victim of the first dreadful emotions, or the subsequent distress and sadness. The younger portion of his family have in their lively age the power that counteracts in due time the pressure of sorrow. It must appear to you all a strange and affecting circumstance, that the son, the brother, the husband, the father that was, a few days since, is now no more in any of those relations, no more to be conversed with, and, after a few days, to be seen no more on earth.

I join in the wish which will be felt by you all, that this solemn event may be rendered salutary to the best interests of those who suffer so mournful a visitation.

I feel very sensibly the kindness of your renewed invitation at this season of sorrow. I could not hesitate if the circumstances, as I will plainly describe them, did not put upon me what I think you will acknowledge to be an absolute compulsion.—I say not a word about what I did mention, for one thing, in my reply to W——, the return of that incommodious affection under which I suffered at Bourton, when I had the pleasure of seeing you there. It is a very inconvenient attendant on travelling and visiting; but I think it is beginning to yield a little to the application of what was so kindly sent me by Miss B——. At any rate I would not, after your letter, let *that* prevent my seeing you at the time I had engaged. It is this matter of Dr. Marshman's that forms the *iron* of the bondage. The case stands thus. He has found his ugly task, partly from the complication and extent of subjects involved in it, vastly

more toilsome and tedious than he calculated; and now he is receiving letters day after day from friends in different quarters, expressing wonder what he can be about, telling him that he is leaving them without competent means to act efficiently as his advocates. He is therefore become painfully anxious to get the article, or rather the first and larger half of it, out very soon.—As to what *himself* has now remaining to be done, he might dispense with any assistance I can give him. But the thing is, that I have been inveigled into undertaking to write something in the way of *preface*, in my own name; and it has unfortunately spread into such prolixity, that it cannot now be brought to a decent ending, short of the length of a *long sermon*. A portion of it remains yet to be composed, and the whole of it to be (I dare say) *tediously* revised, transcribed, and seen through the press. My experience certifies me that this is *impossible* to be done within the short interval before the time that I had so confidently promised myself to see you at Worcester. And the interposition of a week of delay at this juncture would really be a *very* serious injury to the pressing interests of one of the best men, as I certainly believe, on earth, and combined with his the interests of Serampore. If I were to say I must go to Worcester, he is too unassuming, by far, to remonstrate, but he would feel extreme regret; and he is half jaded and oppressed to death already, between the tedious labour and the grievous and harassing nature of what he has been about.—In addition to the disagreeable task on my hands I must find time, if I can, to answer several of the letters which I too have received on the business.

This, my dear Sir, is the simple truth of the case. You will *partly* see the stress of it, but cannot in the same degree in which I am made sensible of it from being implicated in it.—I presume that your sister and Mr. Easthope are with you, or at the house of mourning—*emphatically* such. I shall sympathize with you on the melancholy scene which is probably yet to come. How differently will the house, the gardens, the church, and above all the family, appear from what they have ever done before!

I will not conclude without saying that I promise my-

self to see you at a little distance, I hope, further on in the spring—if indeed the event that darkens to you *this* period of the spring, did not warn against all confidence in projects for to-morrow.

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CXLVII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, August 16, 1828.*

. . . . So your old war against London, in firm alliance, too, with Mrs. Hill, is to end in submission. . . . And there, said I, looking in the map of Cornwall for the situation of Camberne, and finding it at so practicable a distance from Portreath, St. Agnes, and what not, there goes away my dream of passing a few weeks with them in a locality so near that fine picturesque coast—there it goes in chace of my former dream of seeing them on the edge of the highlands of Scotland. *Sic transit gloria!*

Mrs. Hill and the young people have done wisely to take an indēmnification beforehand in North Wales, for what is sacrificed in the way of nature's fine things by the surrender of Cornwall, perhaps the final surrender in respect to residence; for if you get reconciled to London, there is circuit for you after circuit, at only two or three miles distance at each remove, and still again and again the same round, till you get up to the patriarchal age of old Wesley himself. Adieu therefore now to coasts, hills, rills, and every thing of that kind; henceforward it is to be, streets, smoke, fogs, and the Thames. But I hope the benefit to friend John will compensate for the difference. . . . I never did or could like that bar-business for him,\*

\* "As to John's zealous interest about non-professional affairs, I could have assumed all that without your telling me. And now do not pretend that I am *taking part against his father* if I say that, while said father will do right to remonstrate against *excess*, he should not treat it as *all* excess. While I hope the young advocate and juriconsult will duly work his law-books, it were yet in vain to deny to him that the present and coming-on events in the great world are of vast and almost unlimited importance to all mankind, announcing a momentous change in the condition of the nations, ominous, in all probable appearance, of the wide destruction of those dominations which have so long held them in slavery



but as it is apparently his *fate*, he will be very properly desirous to bring all attainable qualifications into convergence upon it. How it would please me and vex you, if he should, after all, turn Methodist preacher, or tutor of a Methodist academy—if Baptist, better still; instead of going to lose his conscience, and perhaps morals too, among a set of the most unprincipled fellows on the earth.

. . . There is little to be said about myself. . . . What is called "change of air" is strongly recommended, and accordingly I am going next week, if there be any tolerable alteration of this dolefully wet weather, on a short visit to Worcester, and thence probably to my medical brother-in-law at Bourton. Thence I must come to have the meeting with Dr. Marshman, who will probably not be in this part of the country afterwards. His affair having occupied me during much the greater part of the year, during which I should otherwise have been about other work, and earning a little money in that way, which I want as much as my neighbours; so that I am most miserably in arrear with certain doings which I ought to have been about, and had pledged myself to do my best to perform long since. I am therefore under every kind of obligation to try to do what I can during the descent of the year, after having been defrauded of the best and most genial part of it. Besides the usual grievance and distress which I always experience in any mental labour there is the painful addition, that latterly my eyes are in such a state of weakness and uneasiness, that I can read very little, and am all the worse off for even thinking. Every day, and almost every hour, I am forcibly reminded, that life is fast coming toward the dregs—and will, ere long, come to its conclusion. At the same time, I have less of the former complaint of the stomach. . . . This impossibility of reading enough to be of any use (from the state of my eyes) exacerbates my mortification for the folly of having accumulated so many now useless books.

and superstition, and precursors or the commencement, it may be presumed, of the grand process (too probably a tremendous and calamitous one) by which the Governor of the world will prepare the way for the ultimate dominion of truth and righteousness."—*Mr. Foster to Rev. Josiah Hill.*

. . . . While writing the above, with the intention of despatching this sheet by to-day's post, I was somewhat chagrined by a note introducing a gentleman of the Caledonian kirk, a stranger from the neighbourhood of Stirling, but luckily a mortal foe to all episcopacy; a man of large information, of large travelling, and modest to the last degree. I have been much pleased with him, and now return to my writing.

. . . . Hall was lately saying that there must infallibly be, ere long, a great alteration in the constitution of the conference; among other things, that the *laymen* will either obtain an introduction into it, or will do their best to blow it up. All this notwithstanding, I declare to you once again, that I am always glad to hear of the enlarging extension of the Methodists, from my uniform conviction that (with no small discount for harm) they are on the whole doing great good. . . .

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OXLVIII. TO JOHN PURSER, JUN., ESQ.

Sept. 30, 1828.

I am just returned from an excursion of rather protracted duration in Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, &c. A letter received at Worcester from my wife, informed me that a young gentleman, your son, had been here. I regretted having thus been prevented seeing him, and still more so, on now hearing her description of the intelligent and manly character apparent in the transient visitor.

But—*your son*,—a young man of mature age,—I seem to be unable to realize the fact. All my ideas fix on *yourself*, as a *youth very much in minority of age*; and I cannot carry my imagination on, through the succession of events from that period, so long past, to the present state of your condition.

My dear friend, your shrewdness will have perceived how I am contriving to slide into the letter without accounting first for the long silence since I received yours, which, with your father's, gave me the most animated

gratification. But for explaining—that cannot be, that is quite impossible, unless you could (and you cannot) shape to yourself a conception of such a disease of procrastination, as you never saw exemplified, in an equal degree, in any person whom you can have had within your habitual and prolonged observation. To be sure it is a *moral* disease—but it has clung to me with all the tenacity of a natural and constitutional one.

I will, however, repeat, with what a strong emotion of pleasure I received the communications from Dublin—a pleasure which I certainly *intended* to express without delay. Some mortification, I acknowledge, mingled with the pleasure. The warm kindness of my old friends had the effect of giving edge to my self-accusation; and this, in truth, however perversely, operated somewhat concurrently with the tendency of the disease of which I have been complaining. But now I am recognized as an old friend, and will gratefully take my position accordingly. I will try to place myself, as now an old man, near you, now a man in middle age, but appearing to me, whether I will or not, and however I may strive to change the aspect and situation, in the image of a youth of fifteen. Nothing less than seeing you will set me right; and as my remembrance of you, and of our diversified intercourse at that time, are among the most distinct of the things that remain with me from the long past, I am certain I should, in the event of seeing you, have to combat with a very strange confusion of ideas, and that the *one* person would very obstinately, for a long time, be *two*,—indeed, perhaps always. It would, however, be very interesting to me to hear from you very minutely, as means of identification, the long history of the progress of events during the blank interval of so large a breadth of time. I should recount, to see whether or how much you recollected in coincidence with me, a number of the particulars, the adventures, the debates, the juvenile fancies, which stand representative in my mind of the young friend of a third part of a century back.

It would be highly interesting to me to see your family, and you in the midst of them, and Mrs. Purser, whom I so well recollect as Miss Allen—who did not much like me—

at which I am far from wondering,—and indeed think she was considerably in the right, for certainly I was a queer article in those times. I can recollect what an indifferent figure I cut in divers respects and situations. I should be much amused to recall some of them with her,—if she had any marked remembrance of any of them. But, my good friend, neither did she, at that time, much like *you*; and it would have seemed an extremely improbable event that you should ever have become united in the most intimate relation of life. I was pleased at hearing, last summer, that a thing so unlikely had actually come to pass, and am happy to believe I may most justly congratulate you both; and I most cordially wish you may very long contribute to each other's happiness.

It is gratifying that you appear to have cause for so much satisfaction in viewing your family, when I see so many parents, on every hand, afflicted with apprehension and sorrow on account of their children; insomuch that I have acquired a feeling which (tacitly perhaps) congratulates parents on the early removal of their children by death. This is not from any painful experience of my own. . . . My eldest, who would now have been a young man about nineteen, died of consumption two years since; and left the consolation of an assured hope that he is removed to a higher, happier region. He had previously been, though with very minor faults, an object of considerable solicitude, in consideration of what a world of temptation he was (as it was mistakenly presumed) entering into; a world quite dreadful in its aspect on the character and destinies of young men. He departed in humble, pious hope,—and I have never wished him here again,—have felicitated him, rather, on his final escape from all sorrow and sin. . . .

It would be a high gratification to me, to hear those opinions of men and things which you have been forming and maturing throughout the more than thirty years since I saw you. It would be curious and interesting to see how far our general or particular notions, preferences, or aversions, would coalesce, after our having so long passed through different trains and scenes of observation and experience. From the early acuteness and intelligence, of which

I have so perfect a recollection, I am sure you cannot have failed to be a keen observer and independent thinker, while a vast variety of moral phenomena have passed before your view. Your early sentiments were forming to a cast not greatly alien from my own; and I cannot help flattering myself that we should, in many points, find ourselves at this time in agreement, even after so immensely long a dissociation.—Have you taken a considerable, or a lively, interest in *political* events and subjects? If so, you have suffered a long course of grievous mortifications,—especially in relation to your own country. And in what a fearful state is that country at this hour!—I cannot be sure, but am strongly inclined to presume, that you think the whole system of the Government respecting it bears a character of absolute infatuation; that a “lying spirit” has prompted and directed all their councils:—and with such a ministry as we have now, for a judgment sent on the nation, it is gloomy, and, indeed, quite dreadful, to look forward to the course and issue of things in Ireland.

You have lately had, in Dublin, Dr. Marshman. . . . That Serampore affair has, during the last twelve months, occupied my time and attention to a very self-sacrificing extent; and, I am afraid, to very little useful purpose.

. . . . After reading the principal of these opponent publications, I have to say, that my opinion is *modified* in *some points*.—For one thing,—as to the alienation or hostility between the seniors and the junior missionaries,—the testimony thus produced of the feelings of *so many* of these latter, does lead me to believe that the fault was not so *wholly* on their side as Dr. M. represents, and certainly thinks. At the same time it is to be considered that all this is their own story, that they went to India with no proper information, and with expectations which were *necessarily* disappointed,—and that many of the circumstances stated in accusation are such (I know that *some* are such) as the seniors could so state as to turn the accusation on the juniors. . . . Yet I admit the impression that in *some degree*, not possible to be precisely assigned, there *was* cause to complain of the manner in which the seniors exercised, in some particulars, their rightful ascendancy.—Another thing to be admitted is, that the coalescence, the unanimity, of

sentiment among the three seniors, has not been so perfect and entire as had been supposed, while *substantially* and *generally*, they have, beyond all question, coincided in sentiment, purpose, and plan of proceeding.—But how carelessly, indiscreetly, and sometimes inconsistently, they have each and all (the three) written to their friends, at various times! But these discrepancies are the produce of a ransack of (I have heard) 700 letters and papers. What might not be the result of such a ransack, for such an exclusive purpose, of *any* three associated men's writings during nearly thirty years' co-operation?—Another point which these documents show somewhat more plainly and strongly than Dr. M. had stated, is, that in the undigested and undefined state of their early notions of their situation relatively to the Society, they had not come to a distinct and positive *principle of independence* till after a very considerable advance of time. . . . But their solid ground in this question is, that from nearly the beginning they *acted* independently, in all manner of ways, and in very important and even hazardous matters, in which they practically held themselves under no control of the Society, not seeking either its assistance or counsel.—But these are minor matters, which, however, as I foresaw, would be laboured against the Serampore men, to keep out of sight the great substance and mass of their achievements and merits, namely, that they have most indefatigably laboured for nearly thirty years for the Christian service, that they have faithfully expended all they have acquired, in every way in and upon that service, and that finally they have nothing for themselves—excepting still to labour, through the remainder of life, whether through “evil report” or “good report.”

. . . . But for this obtrusive and endless topic, I should have said something in express answer and acknowledgment to my old, excellent, and always dear friend, your father. . . . He and I, I do certainly believe, are the same men that we were almost an age since; but doubtless we should, if we met, feel mutual and strange wonder to see the operation of time. We shall not long, now, remain under that operation. Eternity is beginning to throw on us its mysterious gleams through the growing shades of our evening of life. . . .

## CXLIX. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*December 15, 1828.*

. . . . . For the *evenings*, I have been a prisoner all the autumn, and must be all the winter—rigorously so. A cold and cough, confirmed from time to time, last winter and spring, has been partially removed by the whole fine summer; during which I took more than a month's excursion, in parts of Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, and Herefordshire, under the most favourable auspices possible of weather, hospitable friends, and care, avoidance of all evening parties, and exemptions from public exercises. The cough at one time had very ill-omened symptoms, as evidently betraying an affection of the lungs. I am strictly ordered to keep out of the evening damp and cold,—never go into the town in the evening, not even to hear Hall—and take every sort of care. The cough is very much diminished, and I expect that continued care will remove the remainder. Within the last half-year I have lost (so nearly wholly, as to amount to quite the same thing) the hearing of one ear, without any known cause, without pain, but in such a manner as renders it certain it will always remain lost. And all my poor teeth are gone, but three or four that are soon to follow. Otherwise I am in much better health than two or three years since.

Good wife is in the same feeble, ailing, but patient way. I could not tell you in any moderate number of words, or pages, or sheets, the state of the Serampore affair. That affair has been sadly and utterly consuming my time and attention for the whole past year—a vast number of laboured letters to write, &c., &c.

Hall has had a whole year of most miserable suffering, under his old complaint. In other points of health he seems tolerably well, and no decadence in mind.

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CL. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

[On the death of Mrs. Hill.]

*Stapleton, December 26, 1828.*

What shall I—can I—say to my dear old friend, on whom the hand of God has been so heavily and mysteriously laid? This has been the question with me from day to day, while each returning morning I have been resolving not to let the day pass without an attempt to speak to him in terms of commiseration; and still a constant feeling of utter impotence has frustrated my resolution. To *Him* alone who has afflicted, it belongs to impart the merciful influence to sustain you under the overwhelming calamity. And I pray him to enable you to yield yourself up to him in resignation, and repose on him for support. May all that you so firmly believe, and have so often cogently taught, of the consoling efficacy of faith in the divine goodness, be realized to you now in your season of deepest distress! It *is* all true—you *know* in whom you have believed—and that he is all-sufficient to console his servants, in the most painful and melancholy scenes in which his sovereign dispensations may place them. He does not bring them under oppressive trials to desert them there, and leave them to their own feeble strength. He *will* not leave you; he *can* sustain you—and I trust he will give you power to lay hold on him for strength.

From your letter previous to the last, I could not help admitting some dark and painful forebodings; insomuch that the external signs on your last, gave me a strong intimation of what it was to tell me. Yet I had, till receiving it, indulged some little hope that our dear friend might be recalled from the fatal brink, to remain a companion and a blessing to her family. But the sovereign authority, the voice which angels and saints obey, still called onwards. She was appointed for other society. She has now entered into it,—in a scene whence all her warm affection for those she has left behind (an affection, we may well believe, inextinguishable by death) would not move in her happy spirit a wish to return. In that society no doubt she has joined, for one dear and happy associate, her admirable son



who had gone before, as if on purpose to congratulate her on her arrival. If you could know the heavenly rapture of those mutual felicitations! "Too happy," you would say, "too happy *there* for me to wish those beloved beings were, even for my sake, again in a world like this. Rather let me patiently go on my journey, deprived of their loved companionship, till I shall obtain it again—where I can never lose it more." How soon the few fleeting years of our remaining life will be gone! Oh that they may, through the discipline of the Divine Spirit, be a process to prepare us to mingle in the felicities of our departed, sainted friends, and gratefully exulting in the presence of Him who has exalted them from this sinful world to his own blessed abodes! I have lived for several years in the apprehension of being visited by such a dispensation as that under which you are suffering,\* and there has been a degree of consolation in the thought, that I am too far advanced in life for the deprivation, if it should be inflicted, to be a loss of very long duration.

By this time, what was mortal of our dear friend has been consigned to its resting-place in darkness and silence; and I can pensively sympathize in the profound musings in which your spirit is drawn to follow the immortal part. Oh, what is the transition? Whither is that immortal essence gone? In what higher manner does it live, and know, and exert its faculties no longer involved in the dark tabernacle of dying flesh? Our departed friend does not come to reveal it to us. But enough to know that it is a deliverance from all pains, and weakness, and fears,—a deliverance from *sin*, that most dreadful thing in the universe. And it is to be past death—to have accomplished that one amazing act which we have yet undone before us, and are to do. It is to know what that awful and mysterious thing is, and that its pains and terrors are gone past for ever. "I have died," our beloved friend

\* "It would be an irrational presumption to reckon on it, that we and our two inestimable female associates, shall all be found on this earth at the end of the six years next to come. Within that period past there has gone away, from each of our little families, *one* individual that *was* with us, but whom we shall see no more till after we also shall have passed the dark frontier."—*Mr. Foster to the Rev. Josiah Hill, September 13, 1828.*

says now, with exultation, "and I live to die no more! I have conquered through the blood of the Lamb." . . . .

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CLI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*January, 1829.*

. . . . . Wherever you fix or remove, it is affecting to consider what a changed condition Divine Providence has appointed to accompany you. In every former movement and station, during a very long lapse of time, you have been accompanied by one of the best, and dearest, and most affectionate friends that any mortal was ever favoured to possess.\* Whatever else you found untoward, whoever else might be unamiable or ungracious, *she* was ever good and kind. It is now appointed to you that no longer herself, but her memory, is to accompany you—a memory ever dear and cherished, present every day and hour, presenting her image as still smiling tenderly upon you, but, therefore, still telling you what you have lost. But yet this will not be *all* that the beloved vision will tell you. It will represent to you that she herself still lives; that she has ceased to live with you, only because her Heavenly Father required her presence in a higher abode; that she waits for you there, admonishing you to be, meanwhile, patient and

\* "I have often imagined to myself how you would feel (and indeed, how I myself should feel) at the cottage, and each spot in the vicinity, of that favourite Little Haven,—where has so often been seen,—and where would be seen no more,—that countenance so kind, so benignant; where at moments there would be almost the expectation of hearing—but there would not be heard—that voice, expressive of every gentle and amiable sentiment, uttering some affectionate wish, or some considerate suggestion, for the pleasure or advantage of each friend in the little company; with a generous disinterestedness, a forward readiness to sacrifice her own convenience, which has always struck me as pre-eminently conspicuous in the character of her who is now gone to a congenial region and society,—a region and society where her gentle and generous spirit is emphatically *at home*. That 'she is here no more,' will be the affecting and painful thought in every place you can visit where she has been your loved associate; but then, let faith take up the words, and *tell where she is*,—and where she will affectionately wait to receive those she has left behind."  
—*Mr. Foster to the Rev. Josiah Hill, March 25, 1829.*

zealous in accomplishing *your* appointed term of duty and trial, as she has accomplished hers; and that every day and hour of this your faithful progress, brings you nearer to a happy and eternal re-union. While you can no longer live for her, may you the more live to that supreme and eternal Friend to whom and with whom *she* now lives, more happily and nobly than the highest attainment of any of his servants while yet sojourning on earth. You will often fall into profound and earnestly inquisitive musings on the state of being into which she has made the mysterious transition. What is it to have passed through death, and to be now looking upon it as an event *behind*—an event from which she is every moment further removing; when so lately, when but a few days since, she was every moment, as all mortals are, approaching nearer and nearer to it? What must be the thoughts, the emotions, on closely comparing these two states, under the amazing impression of actual experience? How many dark and most interesting and solemn *questions* (as they are to us—as they recently were to her) are now, to her, questions no longer! And would her happy spirit wish it possible and permitted, to convey to you and her children some part of the knowledge which has thus, since she left you, come upon her like the rising sun? No; she sees it is not proper; that it would not be for the welfare of those she has left behind and still loves: but delights to anticipate that the time will come for them to attain this glorious and marvellous light, like her, and with her. And if it may be presumed that while assuredly nothing that is taking place on earth can cause her *pain*, it may consist with the economy of that state, that she shall derive *pleasure* from what is in progress in the scene she has left, nothing—except the general triumph of her Redeemer's cause—nothing will administer more joy than her husband's and her children's advancing on the way to heaven. To *them*, her children, I trust this affecting event will be made a powerful confirmation and enforcement of all their best convictions and resolutions. It is thus only that such an irreparable loss can be compensated to them; so that their loss shall be not only *her* gain, but *theirs* also.

When you shall have recovered composure enough to resume public labours, the activity and frequent exercise,

with its varieties of place, will be beneficial to you. At present it may often seem to you that you can never again have spirit and vigour of mind enough for such activity. But, though pensive and desolate feelings will often invade you, I trust that the *compelled* exertions of your office will contribute to break the *continuity* of your sorrow, and aid the softening effect of time; while religion, above all, will impart the consolations which you will often have to assure your hearers that the afflicted must seek and will find, in that best resource. You will have to assure them—and may you have the happy experience of it—that the divine mercy and support are all-sufficient. . . .

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CLII. TO JOHN EASTHOPE, ESQ.

February 24, 1829.

At this one turn, I have the greatest delight in adverting to the political business in your St. Stephen's chapel. The dictators there have for once been dictated to. They pretend indeed to kick at the imputation of *fear*, of acting under dire compulsion, and all that; but the Catholic Association knows better. But never mind either motives or pretences, so the good thing be done. How baffled are all our calculations! We deplored Canning's extinction; whereas Canning declared he *would* not help the late claims of the Dissenters: and it seems doubtful whether he *could* in a Whig ministry, even making the Catholic business "a cabinet measure," as they call it, whether he actually could have carried this most important point. And now, here is a driving, dashing fellow of the sword, from whom we expected nothing for Ireland but a Brunswick manifesto and a host of bayonets—and the thing is done at a stroke. Here too is Peel, as staunch as any rock or stock against the whole affair—and a complete Tory ministry, adverse to political liberty in all shapes and places—here we have them doing the very thing which all the bigots and anti-reformists were exulting to have them in power again from the confidence that they *would be sure never to do*.

Still I am somewhat in fear till I see the business over,

that there will be, to please the poor creatures who are afraid lest we should be all burnt alive, some invidious and ungracious *drawback*, under the name and notion of "securities"—a most ridiculous notion and term—as if there could be any securities but those consisting in the goodwill of the Irish people, and the wisdom, equity, and strength of the Protestant nation and government. You will see some fine battling, fine canting, fine ratting, and fine mortification. For once you will have the delight of seeing the *power* on the right side, so new and exhilarating a circumstance after you have so many times heard a good cause (this one and others) vigorously advocated with the desponding, sullen reflection all the while, that it was all lost labour.

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CLIII. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

April 30, 1829.

There is little to be said about the Serampore affair. . . My estimate of the main and substantial merits of the case remains unchanged. The *modification* of opinion which I have been led to admit, on *apparently* sufficient evidence is, that Dr. M.'s family and domestic arrangements *have* latterly taken somewhat too much of a *stylish* cast, through an indulgence of the young people's taste for the *genteel*. Not that I believe that this has gone at all beyond what is vastly common among our good people, and good non-cons., in this country, whose means would admit of it; but the thing is, that a quite different standard is, and resolutely will be applied to a *mission family*, avowedly acting, and really *having* acted, on a principle of *entire* self-devotement to the Christian cause. In consideration of the use that will infallibly and very *effectually* be made of any even small deviation from this high principle, by the enemies, I have urgently inculcated on Dr. M. the wisdom of excluding at his return, any real excess of show and style."\*

\* "This is a matter not reducible to any strict rules of propriety. Our well conditioned and genteelish non-cons. would spurn at any such prescription and interdictions; but the high and devoted character assumed by the

CLIV. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

December 5, 1829.

The last time of my being at Worcester, I left you with very irksome feelings, on account of having declined even so much as one instance of compliance with the friendly requests for a public service of any kind. Not exactly that I reproached myself for not having complied, but an indistinct mingled mortification respecting it altogether, as what would appear an unfriendly thing *to you personally*; for as to the *ministers*, my acquaintance had been so small as to make it a different case from what it would be with some old familiar friend, like *Coles*, with whom I had had a sort of social connection for many long years continuously. . . . It may seem strange enough, and indeed, no good symptom of character, that I should feel such extreme repugnance to such services. And I am perfectly aware that more candour than I could expect from any one but yourself and Mrs. Stokes, would be requisite for allowing any validity to my explanation;—that, having been so long out of the practice of preaching, I have come to feel very great inaptitude, except for some such thing as an off-hand talk in some of our village meeting-houses—that, from infrequency in part, it is in *such places alone* that I could feel myself in any degree at ease in such off-hand work—that, having next to no memory at all, it is in vain for me to make any preparation, beyond a few written sentences, of which, as suggestions, I am to make just what I can at the time, and that I can *make nothing* of them except where much at my ease from the *pitch* and quality of the auditors—and that, in addition, I have great difficulty, from failure of sight for near objects, to make out even the largely-scrawled lines on my paper—that, therefore, I have everything against me for making any thing of the exercise but a cause of mortification to myself, and, as an inevitable consequence, to my friends

Serampore fraternity, and the very invidious circumstances in which they were placed, rendered it an important and evident law of prudence, to maintain as much as possible of even a *puritanic simplicity and unworldliness* in their economy.”—*Mr. Foster to the Rev. J. Fawcett, April 24, 1830.*

among the auditors. I have spoken the literal truth about *preparation and memory*. Even in the Bristol *lectures* some years back, my preparation did not go one inch beyond the bare written scheme, which might have been read in perhaps a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes. I was long enough in writing those bare schemes—often as much as three days; but even then, under very considerable responsibility, I never could do any thing at all in the way of what may be called *filling up*. That would have far more than *doubled* the time, and besides, such endless labour would have been nearly useless, as I was absolutely certain that I should retain no recollection, to any purpose, of what I might have so prepared. But the consequence was, the constant hazard of failure, which sometimes did take place in a most mortifying degree. So that between such toil and such liability to failure notwithstanding, I was glad to make an end of the service. The truth is, that it costs me—or rather *would* cost me—more labour than any other preacher alive, to do that which, *in one sense, I am able to do*, able, that is to say, supposing *all circumstances favourable*. All this being thus matter of unpleasant experience, I have fully declined all preaching but such little village work as I have mentioned; and even that is now of rare occurrence, in consequence of there being a settled minister now at the place to which I used oftenest to go. In Bristol I believe I shall never preach again. I have told the friends so, in such honest terms, that I am now never applied to, except that I was asked to make one sermon at Broadmead, during Hall's absence, which I refused. . . .

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CLV. TO JOHN PURSER, JUN. ESQ.

1830.

. . . . I do not know whether you saw much of Dr. Marshman in his visit (there were, I think, two visits) to Dublin. . . . Uniformly, and in all places, we have observed him indisposed, in an *uncommon* degree, to magnify or dilate upon his own services. I never knew a man who had done half so much who would advert to it half so little.

I was struck with the fact, and have often mentioned it, that days and weeks might have passed away in conversational companies (in which the subject of Serampore was not formally, and by express requisition of the party, made the matter of discourse) without any person's being made aware that Dr. M. had ever done any thing in the least remarkable. He would talk largely of *India*, in all its relations; but what he had done there would uniformly be the very last thing of which he would speak. Often, in such companies, he would not speak of it at all, unless in answer to some direct inquiry. When he did speak of Serampore, as led to it formally and necessarily by the object and intention of the meeting, it was *always* in the most moderate terms as respecting himself. He habitually merged himself in the partnership—the “union;” and in all ways, and on all occasions, without the least sign of affectation, gave the precedence to Dr. Carey. One of the most marked characteristics of “pride” is high-toned contempt, or indignant reaction to imputations, reproaches, depreciation, &c. Now I never saw so little of this in any other mortal man who was the object of censure, injustice, and abuse. The contrary temper in him was so remarkable that I used to be curious to discover wherein it consisted—how much of it was a Christian patience and quietude, and how much an unsensativeness of natural constitution. I thought there must be much of the latter, from the uniformity, nearly, of the phenomenon. I have myself used more rough language to him, and quite in serious driving earnest, than I ever did to any other man in all my life, and have been amazed how he could take it all without bristling into anger, an effect which I never witnessed but in one instance; in which I doggedly, and I believe fiercely, traversed and contradicted him in a particular explanation. I have often thought exactly this—that *he had not pride enough to give him a dignified and manful bearing, to make himself be treated with any thing like the due deference and respect.* Ward I know, and Carey I believe, would have allowed no such liberties as were taken by Dr. M. without reaction and with perfect impunity. Really I was sometimes ashamed for his tameness, as *letting him down* from the proper degree and tone of



manly dignity and respectability. And often enough I wondered, reflectively, *how it could be* that I could, involuntarily, be so divested of respectful feeling, and of the appropriate manners and language, toward a man whose excellence and practical services I rated, with the most perfect conviction, so eminently high. And a chief cause I still found to be, his want of a certain *manly assumption*, which partakes of the *noli me tangere*, and the *nemo me impune lacessit*.

There are other things in the case certainly. His manners are somewhat uncouth; his theological language is of the humblest old school; his intellect is not vigorous or acute; and he has, in regard to the affairs and persons in a state of hostility, a dread, carried to excess, of direct, bold, uncompromising conflict. To effect things by management; to carry a purpose without firmly avowing it; to persist in a design (for he is very pertinacious) under a silence which might have led opponents to imagine he had relinquished it; to assign but in part his reasons for it; to endeavour to frustrate an opponent's design in the *quietest* way possible; to raise an obstacle from circumstances, rather than to make a direct, bold opposition or attack; to wear out the time, instead of putting an affair promptly to hazard; to prefer in all cases, caution to boldness; to temporize sometimes to a fault; such I can well believe to have been, in India, the policy which has brought on him such a violence of censure and opprobrium. . . . Such is the policy which Dr. Carey himself is cited as having, in a letter of old date, denominated "crooked," but with no *emphasis* of disapproval, as is manifest from his firm, unalterable attachment to his colleague from first to last. He did not *like* this policy, it was not quite agreeable to the plain straightforwardness of his own character; but he did not at all regard it as *vicious in principle*, only an unlucky peculiarity of character in a man who was upright in his motives and objects; a man who was devotedly and disinterestedly faithful to the great cause, and whose services to it were important, incessant, and indefatigable. In that very same letter of Dr. Carey, the paragraph describing the said "crooked policy" was immediately followed by an expression, in strong terms, to this effect:—"notwithstanding any

such faults in my colleague, *my best wish for the mission is, that it may never want a Marshman.*"\*

. . . . But now, after all, as to Dr. M., am I pretending *wholly to justify him*? no; for one thing, I do not *like* that same which I have adverted to, as what has been denominated "crooked policy;" though I assuredly believe that his prevailing motive in practising it has been to serve the good cause, by avoiding collisions and explosions, and getting the work quietly forward. I believe, too, that in some critical conjunctures, mischiefs and dangers have been thus evaded, when a different manner of proceeding would, in all probability, have incurred them. For another thing, I am convinced by a comparison of testimonies, that . . . . he has latterly allowed, or, more correctly, not prevented, as much as he might and should, the growth of a certain stylishness and affectation of genteel life in his domestic establishment. But, not to say how difficult parents are every where finding it to dictate discretion and taste to their young folks, and shape their habits to a primitive or philosophic standard, especially if any of them should be of the utmost use and necessity in the establishment; not to insist on this, I believe the show and stylishness in question and in accusation, to be nothing more than what is practised or aspired to by very many of our good Christian people, who are in what are called handsome circumstances. The unfortunate thing is, that this genteel style of life, being admitted into an establishment which was long maintained on a system of rigorous economy, and constituted on an avowed and permanently obligatory rule, of strictly "devoting all to God"—obligatory, that is to say, from voluntary pledge and vow—has afforded an occasion (vastly exaggerated in the representation) for making the charge of a dereliction of the original missionary spirit, and a degeneration into worldly character and habits. . . . But now,

\* "Brother Marshman's excellences are such that his defects are almost concealed by them; and I believe him to be one of the firmest friends the mission ever had; and I hope the mission never may stand in want of one like him."—*Dr. Carey to Dr. Ryland, April 11, 1818.* "In point of zeal he is a Luther, and I an Erasmus."—*May 24, 1810.* "Brother Marshman, who is naturally a little tortuous, but than whom a more excellent and holy man does not exist." . . . *May 30, 1816.—From the same to the same.*

after all, look at all this; admit that he has the weakness of such an overweening partiality for his family, as to allow them in some things which he had much better have restrained; and that the tenor of his policy has not been frank, bold, and manly (while, as I feel the most perfect conviction, *systematically and honestly intended for the best*), what a trifling deduction is this from the merit of more than a quarter of a century of indefatigable labour for the service of Christianity, prosecuted in the oppressive climate of India too, with no view to either emolument or fame! Think of one item, the translation of the whole Bible into Chinese, as but a very minor portion of the quantum of his disinterested labours. I can express the more confidently my exceedingly high estimate of him from the circumstance, that he is *not a man to my taste, as a matter of taste*. He is not a man of taste, sentiment, imagination, discrimination, play and reach of thought, free speculation, strong understanding, literary cultivation, or manly cast of deportment; it is his substantial, faithful, Christian excellence, on which my estimate and complacency rest.

. . . . Believe me, my dear Sir, I am vexed, ashamed, and I know not how many more words I might add, to have been led into this tediousness of observation. I have no knack of dispatch. And besides I confess I *did* wish to contribute something in aid of what I thought a correct opinion in a man of whose judgment I have reason to think so highly as of yours, in reference to a matter which is evidently of some importance, as affecting the character and interests of what will be by far the most memorable missionary adventure of our age. I can have no manner of interest about it, but simply as a well wisher to a good cause, under present adverse circumstances. It has consumed as much, all put together, as a whole year of my waning life, and while I had many reasons, a pecuniary one not excepted, claiming that I should be very differently occupied. Mine has been a great and gratuitous sacrifice.

. . . . I was pleased, not at all surprised, at your coincidence with me in opinion about dissenting ordinations, and also about a widely different matter, the principles of Wellington's policy in the measure so favourable to Ireland. One cannot help suspecting that one of his chief motives was a wish to have the military force of the country more

disposable for aid, under possible circumstances, to support that infernal Mohammedan domination in the east of Europe, which one earnestly wishes—all mere political calculations out of the question—to see crushed by the Russian invasion. Under sanction of that old humbug, “the balance of power,” and to prevent some *eventually possible* inconvenience to our trade to the Levant—that is to say, reduced to plain terms, some pecuniary disadvantage—our government would not scruple to sink the nation a hundred millions deeper in debt. But Ireland again; who would have thought that the session of Parliament, commencing with the beneficial *political* measure, would pass off without one particle of anything done for the internal relief and improvement of your miserable population—some plan for cultivating the waste land, or providing for the ejected cottagers? . . . . Unfortunate Ireland, and England too, in having, from generation to generation, a set of statesmen and a court who care really nothing for the public good, any otherwise and further than as it may serve the production of revenue! Still the world, our part of it included, is destined to mend. The sovereign Ruler over all has declared so. And the present extraordinary diffusion of knowledge, accompanied, we may hope, by augmentation of religion; the *mobility*, so visible in the state of the world, the trembling and cracking of parts of the old fabric—the prostration of some of the inveterate tyrannies; these are surely signs that the changing and meliorating process is at least beginning. When our race arrive at such a state as prophecy unquestionably predicts, what will they, can they, think of the preceding ages and of ours?

I am gratified by all you express of the happiness you enjoy in your family, and especially in the merits and valuable assistance of your eldest son, whom I am again sorry not to have seen when he was here. I hope that all these satisfactions will increase with their and your advancing life, and that they will be largely shared by my old friend, for I will call her so, and should be extremely pleased and interested to see her again as now under the character and name of Mrs. Purser, to whom I request you to express my very kind regards and best wishes for her health and happiness.

And then there is my old, ever remembered, and estima-

ble friend, your father, who, I dare say, is pleased with you altogether. What I am a little sorry for is, that I fear he has deserted our poor old Swift's Alley. Is there no inducing him to return?—provided, I mean, that your people there should behave themselves well under the new settlement you are going to make. I would be remembered to him in the strongest terms of most friendly, grateful, and unalterable regard. . . .

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## CLVI. TO DR. STENSON.

[Extracts from various Letters.]

1831.

Yes, my dear sir, we *must* be prepared to surrender to the inevitable approaches of mortality, and the more earnestly aspire to be ready to surrender the whole of what can die. How striking to realize the idea, that at a time, at the utmost comparatively not distant, this entire material frame, with all that is in it now in order and in disorder, will be under ground and dissolving into dust. I often image to myself the fact, as it will one day be, when, at the same time, all *above* ground will continue to be as we see it now, and are sharers of it, life and activity—a profusion of blooming youth, amusement, business, infinitely various interests and pursuits, and (as now) little thought of death. *So far* the anticipated, inevitable, and prodigious change, cannot but have a dreary aspect. But there is the *never-dying principle*, the spiritual agent, the real and imperishable being; *that* will be set free, and rise in sublime independence of dust, and all that can be turned to dust; let us take care of that, or rather commit it to God to be taken care of, and then never mind the insignificant loss which we are doomed to incur, of a piece of organized clay. . . .

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Let us gratefully hail the gleams that come to us from a better world, through the gloom of declining age, which is

beginning to darken before us, and give all diligence to the preparation for passing the shades of death, confident in the all-sufficiency of Him who died for us, to emerge into the bright economy and the happy society beyond.

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Indeed I would regard as something better than enemies, the visitations that give a strong warning of the final and not remote beating down and demolition of the whole frail tabernacle. A salutary impression made on the soul, even through a wound of the body, is a good greatly more than compensating the evil. In the last great account no doubt a vast number of happy spirits will have to ascribe that happiness to the evils inflicted on their bodies, as the immediate instrumental cause.

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Let us take the admonition, to do what little we can for our great Master before the night shall come. That it is *so* little, is one of the things in which we are required to be submissive to his sovereign will. It is part of the doom of our fallen nature—respecting that miserable debility and corruption of which you can find no man to sympathize with your opinions and feelings more emphatically than I do, and the more so the longer I look at it, and especially have my own personal experience of it.

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How welcome are these shortening days! The precursory intimations of winter even before the summer itself is gone, and how almost frightfully rapid the vicissitudes of the seasons, telling us of the flight of time, the consumption of life, the approximation to its end. That end; that end! And there is an hour decreed for the final one. It *will* be here—it will be past. And then—that other life! that other world! Let us pray more earnestly than ever, that the *first hour after the last* may open upon us in celestial light.

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How strange and mortifying that progress in personal religion is so difficult! that it should not be the natural, earnest, and even impetuous *tendency* of an immortal spirit, summoned to the prosecution of immortal interests!

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It often occurs to meditative thought, what an instant *cure* it will be for all the disorders at once, when the frame itself is laid down, and the immortal inhabitant, abandoning it, will care no more about it; will seem to say, "Take all thy diseases with thee now into the dust; they and thou concern me no more."

How very *conditionally* it is that firm, uninterrupted health is really a blessing. And what a testimony it is against our miserably perverted nature, that a real and eminently great good is so much in danger of proving an evil.

It continually surprises me to think, how little that is remarkable occurs (so as to be known) where a hundred thousand human beings, all busily intent on their purposes, are existing within the circuit of a very few miles. *How monotonous is the human condition!* In fancy, we might have supposed that among such a multitude of living, thinking, acting creatures there should be a continual succession of something to excite surprise, instead of *an endless common-place of existence*. But we see business just going on the usual way; *sin* of all sorts, constant to its customs; religion but little changing its aspects and operations.

As to religion in this country, and the world at large, how passionately one could long to see some great movement, some striking and prodigious changes, some events answering to the figure of "a nation born in a day." It is disconsolate to see, in this respect, the year end nearly as it began: a progress almost imperceptibly slow; such a dead weight on millions of souls; such a vast measure of *means* consumed in producing so little effect toward the one great end. One envies the people of those future times when a new order of powers and progress will be unfolded on the earth.

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. . . . Have you any notion that the world is just on the point of prodigiously mending, or that there is any glimmer of the millennium on the horizon? There is truly little enough of any thing of the kind to be *seen*; but old as I am, and misanthropic, and sceptically given, and all that, I am really willing to *hope* that some considerable good may not be far off, though it is likely to come by a very rugged and costly process.

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CLVII. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

*Stapleton, near Bristol, April 24, 1830.*

I was hesitating whether to look at the date of your letter; I usually avoid, if I can, in self-defence, seeing *that* part of a letter which I am beginning to answer, because it is almost sure to meet me in the character of a reproach. I have not, however, been lucky enough to escape catching sight of the date of yours, and it is just four months since. It gratified me much, both as a proof that friendships of youth may continue alive to far advanced age,—and as conveying many interesting particulars of information from the scene of my early life and interests. But how few, how very few, of the *persons* of my acquaintance in that scene could be found in it if I revisited it now; I should have to read the names on tombstones of most of those with whom I familiarly conversed forty years since. My memory is bad to the most wretched degree; and no small sign of its being so is, that I have much less power of recollecting circumstances in early life than I have observed to be quite usual of persons of my age. As to things comparatively recent, I experience even more than the usual treacherousness of the memory of a person in age, particularly in respect to names. In meeting persons with whom I have been, or even am at present, familiarly acquainted, I am frequently at a loss for the name; so that, unwittingly asking a husband,—“How is Mrs. —?” or a wife,—“How is Mr. —?” I am baffled, stop short, and am driven at last to say—“your wife,”—or the “good man,” or “good lady, at home.” This has happened to me many a time with



persons whom I knew as well as my own door or my old hat.

The worst of it is, that it makes reading very nearly useless to me; I retain but a very dim trace of any thing I read, even striking matters of fact; and as to matters of thought, sometime lately I read on perhaps 100 pages of some book or other (I forget what) without becoming aware, till I came to some remarkable name, or some such thing, that I had *read all those pages but a few weeks before*. . . . Have you had any taste or fancy for *graphical* works, such as splendidly illustrated and picturesque books of travels, antiquity, and the like? This has been my taste quite to a fault; a fault I mean in reference to pecuniary means. . . . Pray, do you often preach? I have suffered an almost entire deposition from that office,—by physical organic debility as the primary cause, and, as an accessional one, by choice, from having felt the great inconvenience and laboriousness of doing occasionally what I have been so long out of the practice of; so that for a long time past I have declined wholly our city pulpits, and never go higher than an easy unstudied discourse now and then in one or two of the neighbouring country villages, where there is no stated ministry. Mr. Hall is in high physical vigour (for the age of 66), while often suffering severely the inexplicable pain in his back, of which he has been the subject from his childhood. His *imagination* (and therefore the *splendour* of his eloquence) has considerably abated, as compared with his earlier and his meridian pitch; but his *intellect* is in the highest vigour; and the character of his preaching is that of the most emphatically evangelical piety. His friends have now surrendered all hope of his doing any thing more in the way of authorship; they have ceased to remonstrate with him on the subject, but most deeply deplore this lack of service to the Christian cause, when they consider that he might have produced half a dozen, or half a score (the more the better) of volumes of sermons which would have filled a lamentable chasm in that province of our literature, and would have been decidedly, considered in their *combination* of high qualities, the foremost set of sermons in our language.

Do you take any more interest in political matters now in

later, than you were inclined to do in earlier life? Very great things have been done in recent times. America set free—Greece—a humiliation of the Mohammedan empire—the Catholic emancipation—and a great part of the world put in a state of mobility, ominous, we may hope, of prodigious and accelerated changes.

How is my old friend Mrs. Fawcett? On meeting her I should look, with eager inspection, to recognize a countenance than which no one is more indelibly impressed on my memory. Give my most friendly regards to her, with congratulations that she has fought so gallantly through the toils of life.

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CLVIII. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

*Stapleton, June 16, 1830.*

. . . . One of the constellation which is shedding such lustre on our dark world (Dr. Okely\*) has withdrawn, or is

\* The Rev. William Okely, M.D., was the third son of the Rev. Francis Okely (formerly of St. John's College, Cambridge), a Moravian minister at Northampton. He was born at Bedford, Jan. 25, 1772, and educated first at Fulnec, and subsequently at Niesky and Barby. On completing his studies, he spent a short time at Christianfield in Denmark, and then returned to Fulnec in the capacity of teacher, but soon resigned, in consequence of holding sentiments which were incompatible with that office. After spending two years with a surgeon at Bedford, he removed to Edinburgh, where he prosecuted the study of medicine and took the degree of M.D. During his stay there, he was highly respected and distinguished for propriety of conduct and character, which he always attributed to his early education among the United Brethren. In 1797 he was chosen Physician of the General Infirmary at Northampton, and while there, published a sceptical work entitled "*Pyrology*." Shortly after he became a firm believer in Christian truth, and immediately published a recantation of his "*Pyrology*."

"The author," he says, "was himself an unconverted man, to whom, of course, all that relates to the transcendental part of creation, could not but appear confused and unintelligible, and the conduct and language of such as were real followers of Jesus, weak and enthusiastic. By the merciful preservation of God, however, he had continued an *honest* man, not pretending to know what he did not know; bold enough to assert what he did know, and vain enough to imagine that what he knew was all that could be known. Suppose such a man tolerably tinctured with the letter of Christianity, but neither understanding it, nor seeing any beauty in it,

withdrawing, his share of the lustre. I saw him lately in Bristol, whither he is come, in a state of extreme physical debility, from which his friends do not anticipate his possible recovery. He is a Moravian of much knowledge and mental sharpness; at the same time a very worthy man. Dr. Chalmers is to preach this evening for the Auxiliary of the British and Foreign School Society, as he did the day before yesterday, at the opening of a capital new meeting-house, built wholly at the expense of Mr. Hare the great floor-cloth manufacturer, and our most munificent promoter of religious especially, but of all, good designs; which he does, apparently, at the expense of far less self-denial than it appears to cost many of our rich professors of religion (especially such as have made their fortunes from nothing by industry) to contribute in a vastly less proportion. Dr. C. retains without the smallest diminution, his simple, friendly, unassuming character and manners. He has with him a delightfully pleasing woman, in the character of his

except the moral precepts and human character of its Author; at the same time educated in retirement, and ignorant of the world; suppose such a one placed in a sphere calculated for extensive observation of mankind, and resolved to judge of the belief of men from their conduct, and not from their public professions;—the picture such a person would draw of man, would, I believe, be nearly that contained in the *Pyrology*. It is the picture of a natural man, the slave of Satan, dead in trespasses and sins, without God and Christ in the world, and hastening to endless perdition; it is the picture of a rational brute; it was his own picture. . . . The immediate sources whence most of the author's mistakes are derived, are first, a presumptuous reliance on the strength of his faculties, and extent of his information; secondly, a want of attention to the *detail* of the gospel history. The worst consequence of my former doctrine is, that it cuts off the doctrine of the atonement—that main pillar of Christianity."

On renouncing his sceptical views, Dr. O. solicited re-admission to the Brethren's church, and in that communion occupied various stations as minister or director of schools. He was distinguished for logical acuteness, and the fearless investigation of truth. His pulpit discourses were marked by originality, and rendered highly interesting by bringing the results of his study of human nature to bear on the characters and facts recorded in the scriptures. Besides the *Pyrology*, his only avowed publications were: 1. A Letter to Robert Southey, Esq., &c., on his Life of the late Mr. John Wesley, and especially that part in which he treats of the Moravians. 2. A Sermon on the Incarnation of the Son of God, 1824. He also contributed a valuable article to the *Eclectic Review* (Jan. and Feb., 1816), on Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works*. He died July 9, 1830

wife, with the addition of his eldest daughter, and two female relations who are on a trip to Scotland for health.

.... There is very little to be said about any thing here. As to matter of health, there is no great variation, except that a cough which I have entirely now got rid of after two years' duration, has been replaced by some other affection, which is probably of a still more fixed character; that is to say, a disordered circulation, a frequently intermitting pulsation, from some unknown and probably organic cause. It is a disorder which suffers great temporary augmentation from very slight occasions, a little sudden, or laboriously hard, corporal exertion, such as walking up a hill, or hastily and eagerly going about any thing, or from any uneasy kind of mental exertion. A long, stout evening's talk is a great mischief: as to any thing like preaching, I believe, I am never to attempt it again, in any place, little or great. Each medical friend enjoins careful avoidance of all such things, as certain to aggravate the internal cause, while not pronouncing the affection to be exactly of a formidable and ominous character, provided I be systematically careful. I have been cupped and afterwards bled, but without any sensible effect. I am never more to climb a Welsh hill, not to say *mountain*. As the people say, I *look* passably well, I guess some of them suspect a little affectation—but they are quite mistaken if they do: I am not, at the same time, suffering any pain. I a little envy you the sight of so much Cambrian scenery as you will pass over, and in sight of, two or three weeks hence; but if I were in the midst of it, I should have the mortification of feeling myself disqualified in quite as great, perhaps considerably greater degree, than by my lameness during that expedition so many years since. There are latterly many things, in addition to mere chronology, to remind me that life is approaching or entering its last stage, and that the grand concern is to prepare for its final hour. Such considerations will sometimes visit the mind of my dear and estimable friend also, though probably not experiencing many *direct* admonitions (in any way of infirmity) of the advance toward old age. ....

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## CLIX. TO JOHN PURSER, ESQ.

[On the death of his Father.]

*Stapleton, near Bristol, August 11, 1830.*

MY DEAR SIR,—A Dublin paper, directed perhaps by the hand of your father (but being from home at the time it came I did not see the superscription), having come to me a little while since, filled with discussions on the subject of negro slavery, I naturally supposed that the paper brought me within this hour, bearing your hand, was occupied with additional matters of public interest in your city. But as occasionally things of personal interest have been signified to me by such a mode of conveyance, it occurred to me to look whether a special mark might be inserted in any part of the paper; and instantly my attention was very strongly and painfully arrested by such an indication. My first prompting to write to you immediately was checked by the consideration that Manchester being the place where our dear and excellent friend took leave of the world, you may, probably, be there, and possibly, there for some time. But then the circumstance that the envelope of the paper probably shows your being in Ireland a number of days later than the 4th, suggests the conjecture of your *possibly having* been at Manchester, and returned by a rapid conveyance to Dublin, accompanying the remains of our departed friend. At all events I cannot allow myself one day of delay in writing, as you will doubtless very soon be in Dublin, if you are not now. When your father was here I was gratified to observe, in the undiminished strength of his faculties and his general tone of alacrity, what appeared to me the promise of many years yet to come of an useful and estimable life. I even (on supposition of some protraction of my own life), promised myself the pleasure of recalling ancient times and scenes with him yet, in the *locality itself* of those scenes. He did not seem to me tenacious of life in *his wishes*, but yet in full capacity to enjoy and occupy it. It is a most pensive thought that all these anticipations are now extinguished, that he is now no more to be seen on earth,

that all intercourse with him in this world is terminated, that he is now to his friends an object of memory alone. That memory (in my case) is carried back to times long, long past; the period is vividly recalled of a long, and various, and most friendly and pleasing intercourse with him—of which, too, yourself were an associate. I shall the oftener, now that I can see him and hear from him no more, revive in my imagination the converse, the walks, the incidents and interests of that now far off period; and shall dwell with great interest on his various worth;—his friendly spirit, his generosity, his mental activity, his zealous interest for every great and good object, and his *religious* virtues. I must needs also feel this event a most serious admonition of that to which I am myself also rapidly approaching, now within a month of completing my sixtieth year. You will feel this event, notwithstanding your being surrounded with objects of affection, so worthy of it, and returning it, a very painful deprivation. There will be a sensible and mournful break and vacancy in the happy circle in which he so often and familiarly appeared, contributing to its complacency while he shared it. I trust the consolatory considerations, and the salutary and religious effect, will be in equal proportion to the loss, the want of the ancient and estimable friend.

It is pleasing to think that he did attain to a good old age, for the since ripening of the qualities and habits preparatory for a higher scene, and for the pleasure of seeing those who were so dear to him so advantageously advanced and advancing in the career of virtue, intelligence, and active duty. I most cordially congratulated him on this when he surprised and pleased me by his most unexpected appearance here.

It is a consolation, too, that he has been exempt from the infelicity of a long lingering infirmity of old age, that shrinking up of existence, and that gradual pressure of a painful load on enfeebled physical and mental powers, so melancholy an object, sometimes, of commiseration and even *patience* to surrounding friends. He has had life as a full possession till he has been called to lay it down. And then, my dear friend, that better, nobler life to which

he is gone! to which I pray that you and yours, that we may all follow him when our appointed time shall come. Let us never, one day, forget that it *will* come; nor is it in the least probable that all our lives shall be protracted to so advanced a period as the seventy-first, attained by our dear and estimable friend.

I cannot help being strongly reminded what a very painful feeling would have been, and most deservedly, inflicted on me by such intelligence, *if* I had not renewed with him the intercourse of friendly regard—a sentiment always invariably alive and undiminished in my mind, during the very long period, the half of a whole life, throughout which I so perversely and unaccountably failed to give any expression of it. I am very emphatically glad to have come into cordial communication again, though so near the close of his life, and so far on in the advance of mine; I may add, of *yours* also.

But I am very desirous to be informed respecting the last period of his life since I saw him, and the circumstances preceding and accompanying the termination. I entreat you to give me this information as soon as you shall have time not required to be otherwise engaged. Was it a long illness? of what nature? was his mind clear to the last? The supports and hopes of piety I can have no doubt that he happily enjoyed.

Had he lived but a *little* longer he would have taken a lively interest and a delighted one in the grand event in France, which was exactly contemporaneous with his very last days and hours. But how much sublimer phenomena he has before this time contemplated!

I have been intending each day, since the former newspaper came to me, indicating a friendly remembrance among you, to write to your *father*!—how little imagining that while I was so intending he was on the point, or in the act, of his removal into another economy!

I remain, my dear Sir,

Most truly and cordially yours,

J. FOSTER.

CLX. TO J. PURSER, ESQ.

*Stapleton, November, 1830.*

MY DEAR SIR,—For many weeks I have been intending to write to you; and, a few days since, took out from a quire this identical sheet for the purpose. The newspaper received from you yesterday admonishes me not longer to defer. A prompt acknowledgment was due for your kind invitation to revisit Ireland. That is a pleasure which I have been long promising myself; and the new kind of navigation has vastly changed the calculation of time and facility in the transit. But the decline of the year, so late as into the autumn, is not quite the desirable season. Short nights are the thing for the sea, and long days, late evenings especially, are the thing for a little adventure, in which one would wish to combine with the friendly household gratifications, some slight trips to see again several of the beautiful spots and scenes of your “green island.”—At the same time, there would be no little pensiveness—perhaps more than the pleasure—indeed I am sure there would—in revisiting some of the places (suppose the Dargle) which I have seen in company with our excellent departed friend, the associate no more in any adventures or pleasures under the sun. Besides our various walks in the Park, to Howth, and other places in the vicinity of the city, I had in company with him and Strahan (also gone), an exceeding interesting excursion into the noble scenery of the county of Wicklow. I have no doubt I should greatly admire those scenes if I were there again; but the effect of far toward forty years since added to my life, and the continually presented thought, “*he* is here no more—nor on earth,” would throw a shade over the beauty and the magnificence.

You may well believe I was greatly interested by your account of his declining health and final removal, and by your sentiments and reflections on the affecting event. You will, indeed, feel it a loss irreparable. But how pleasing and consolatory it is to contemplate a good man’s end;—“the end of that man is peace.” And consider in how inferior and limited a sense it *is* his end; it being the end only of the brief introductory period through which he had



to advance and be disciplined for an incomparably nobler, and an endless life, on which he has now entered, and from which he triumphantly looks *back* on death as a dark passage, through which he will pass no more. *We*, my friend, have yet to pass it; may we do so, when the time shall come, with the same pious Christian peace and confidence, and may we rejoin him in the happy society of a better world! But you, I hope, are appointed to a long protracted series of duties and usefulness in this lower sphere.

.... I warmly congratulate you on the character and abilities of the elder individuals of your children. One of them, I perceive by the newspaper, has acquitted himself worthily at College. What are your prospects or his wishes as to his future pursuits and vocation in life? Such studies and attainments are probably pointing to some professional department. I wish you *could* get a very large infusion of disciplined talent, sound reason, and virtuous principle, among your islanders. You are certainly in a disastrous, and I am afraid perilous, condition;—such fearful excitability, amidst so much ignorance, superstition, poverty, and oppression.—You have sent us hither a famous present in your squire O'Connell,—a man who has accomplished one immense good for Ireland, but whose wild-fire, if not absolutely *unprincipled*, character and purposes, are now doing sad mischief. He is doing his best to throw discredit on all sorts of reforms, so urgently wanted, by the lawless manner in which he is ostensibly co-operating to promote them. Nay, *not co-operating*,—for their more rational promoters are harassed and obstructed by his assistance. How unfortunate that such a man should (instead of a *Grattan*\*) stand forward, by far the most prominent representative of Ireland, to be, in the apprehension of a large portion of the people here, a true sample and interpreter of the collective Irish character.—I have little hope of any material good, for either nation, from the present Parliament, or from the new monarch, about whom there is so mad a rant in fashion.

\* "His eloquence must, in its earliest stage of public display, have evinced itself as the flame and impetus of mighty genius. The man would infallibly be recognized as of the race of the intellectual Incas, the children of the Sun."—*Contributions, &c. to the Eclectic*, vol. ii. p. 333. (*Grattan's Speeches*. *Eclectic Review*, Feb. 1813.)

What is such a man *likely* to know or care about the good of the nation,—whose only notion of kingship, as far as yet appears, is that of enjoying himself at his ease (and putting other people at their ease with him) in a jolly, dashing, gadding sort of hilarity? Think of such a character, and then of the stupid baseness that, even in Parliament, is calling him “the best king that ever ascended the British throne!”—It would be quite enough to say, that it is to be hoped he is *better than the last*—and there could not well be a *cheaper praise*.

I am sure you cannot fail to contemplate with great and serious interest the portentous aspect of the affairs of the nations. There is coming into action, on a vast scale, a principle of change and commotion, of hostility, hatred, and defiance to the old established “order of things,” which absolutely can never be quieted or quelled—which must be progressive with augmenting knowledge (“knowledge is power”), but which, in pervading and actuating a mass so dreadfully corrupt as mankind is in *every* nation, must inevitably, while a Righteous Governor presides over the world, be accompanied in its progress by awful commotions and inflictions. My settled impression is, that the rising generation are destined to witness a process more tremendous than all that their predecessors have beheld. While exulting at what has taken place in France, I have yet no confidence of a peaceful result in Europe. . . .

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CLXI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, December 31, 1830.*

. . . . I am as little as yourself capable of forming, and as little disposed to seek or wish, *new* friendships; nor, yourself excepted (a term approaching to twenty years is enough to confer the denomination *old*, as applied to social relations), do I retain more than some relic of old friendships. I have never been propense to *contract* them. Two or three valuable companions of my early life still survive; objects of my high esteem, but at remote distances,—rarely corresponded with—one of them not seen more than once in a

space of between thirty and forty years,—all of them formed to habits and feelings greatly differing, in many respects, from my own. Here I am on amicable terms with a few excellent individuals, of different degrees of intellectual endowment. With the *grand Chief* in that quality, indeed, my acquaintance has not become intimate. From the first I made a point of duty not to intrude on his time in the morning part of the day, which I considered it as *his* imperative duty (for the public's sake, religion's sake, posterity's sake) to *employ alone*; and in the evenings, with a comparatively rare exception, he is, all the week and all the year round, *out* in company somewhere or other, where I have been compelled to decline many invitations to be of the parties, from experience of the great mischief of turning out of rooms, often heated to excess, into the night air.—Next to him in mental power is *Anderson*, whom, I remember, you met once or twice. He is a *very* powerful man, of great and solid worth. Just now and then I have fallen in the way of Dr. Prichard, for whose qualities I have a high esteem, while I am amazed at his attainments, and his prodigious *faculty* of attaining. I get into what is called company in a very moderate degree, but quite as much as I wish; and it is one recommendation of this dark abode, at several miles' distance from the town, that it serves to limit my liability in that respect. A hard evening's talk, with that abler sort of men, especially if repeated several times at short intervals, does me sensible mischief, as affecting that obscure internal disorder which I have experienced during the last year or two. I am just now the worse in that respect, for several such evenings, which have come too thick at this particular season of convivial meeting; the "generous fare," as we call it, contributing, I have no doubt, to the evil. The morbid symptom is, or was previously to the last few weeks, something less prevailing, I think, than at the time I first mentioned it to you. . . .

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## CLXII. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

*Stapleton, March 9, 1831.*

I was much interested by your information respecting the branches, and movements, and location, of your family. In frequently walking, a vastly remote time since, by the Liffey, but not so far as Celbridge, I could little dream, that one day a part of the Brearley Hall, Foot, and Ewood family was to take an abode by that stream. How much more likely it then was that *I* should do so, who, however, was *not* to do so. There are few things more remarkable than the total *uncalculableness*, if I may make such a word, of the ultimate local destinations of a young family, or a knot of youthful friends.

I know not whether to be sorry (I can be so only in reference to yourself and Mrs. Fawcett personally) that one of your family, by this time a second, and, as you intimate, probably ere long a third, may be found occupied with their various duties in the neighbourhood of Dublin, instead of that of Hebden-bridge. There sadly wants, in the former scene, as many good and useful people as you can spare. . . . I am rather pleased with the project of the third member, for going to preach where there is so notorious a want of religious instruction of the genuine kind.

The name Celbridge instantly recalled Dean Swift to my mind. But I am quite mistaken (very possibly so) if it was not *Vanessa*, instead of *Stella*, that was his companion there. The story of those two women, as told by Walter Scott, in his *Life of Swift*, is very interesting and very mournful; that of *Vanessa* (Miss Vanhomrigh) especially, so ardently affectionate, so wronged, so cruelly consigned to a premature fate.

I congratulate you on such a pleasing novelty as an excursion to Ireland, unfortunate only in its being made in winter. It would be curious, if practicable, to ascertain the difference of effect on the mind, between such an adventure, made at your time of life, and in youth as it happened to me. Latterly, I have been almost intending to make on myself the experiment of this comparison, having been strongly invited to visit Dublin, by almost the only one of my early friends there whom time has left alive,

and whom I have never seen since he was a youth, or rather a boy. His excellent father, in whose house I lived, is very lately dead. *Him*, after more than an interval of thirty years, I did see here the year before last.

Do you feel, in your own person, strong intimations of advancing age? My brother tells me of *snow* on your head. *I* have lost nearly all my teeth, nearly the hearing on *one* side, much of my original strength of sight, and all the tenacity of a memory never more than very moderately good. Within the last year, too, I have become subject to great irregularity and disorder of circulation or pulsation, uncertain from what internal cause, too probably from something organically disordered in the vital central part. It is greatly affected, additionally disordered for the time, by any considerable effort of excited continued speaking; insomuch that any such thing as preaching, which, for years past, I have declined in all but very rare instances, must now be declined wholly. Amidst these monitory defalcations, I am still favoured with a *considerable* measure of what may *comparatively* be called strength. My dear friend, we must think daily of holding ourselves in readiness for setting off on the last great journey. . . .

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CIXIII. TO J. PURSER, ESQ.

*Stapleton, March 29, 1831.*

. . . . I must congratulate you on a great amendment (in respect to the tumultuary disposition) in your green island since the date of your last. . . . I do not wonder, that, in beholding so lawless and alarming a state of your populace, you should have been driven a little too far toward the passive obedience and non-resistance principle; which enjoins the people, in a fallacious and treacherous sense, to "be quiet and mind their own business." "Leave the concerns of government to those whose business it is—the statesmen; *our* part is respect and submission;" was the precept and doctrine inculcated by the good people on me, when a young fellow, blazing with the fire kindled by the French Revolution. And there has been a long and

melancholy illustration of the wisdom and benefit of this succumbing and reverential loyalty, in the accumulation of every sort of corruption; in wanton wars, to gratify the pride of courts; in debts and taxes, which have almost crushed the people to the earth; in the consolidation of a system of iniquity, which, just at this very juncture, when it could be endured no longer, is demanding the whole energy of the national mind and will to be exerted for its abolition; and which is still maintaining a desperate and formidable conflict for the defeat of that whole energy. "Why," one exclaims, as one abomination after another is exposed, "Why did our forefathers, in their besotted loyalty to power, *let* the thing come to this? Curse on their loyalty, though they were silly enough to identify it with piety!"

Too true it is, that some of the nations that have risen in their wrath to crush their oppressors, are showing themselves ill fit for freedom. But what then? They never would have become so under an oppressive despotism. The alternative therefore was, either to continue, age after age, in their old debasing slavery, or to throw it off and get on as they might, through a protracted process of experiment, confusion, and commotion, toward an ultimate state of well-ordered freedom;—which, after all, will never be attained till there be more religion, more reverence for the Supreme and Eternal Sovereign. But here again, how is religion itself to be known, or even freely taught, till the barbarizing power of combined tyranny and superstition be blown up?

A portentous gloom is gathering and thickening over Europe, giving sad presages that there are vials of wrath ready to be poured out, in a *vindictive* dispensation of the Divine Justice. But let us trust, that, while it is vindictive, it will at the same time be corrective, and work on, and work out, into a purer and happier condition of the world at length.

The most grievous scene of our immediate contemplation is *Poland*; such magnificent heroism, such prodigious sacrifices, too probably doomed to end in failure and aggravated national calamity. How often one wishes that some 50,000 of the fiery spirits that are disturbing France,

could be arrayed, with the completest possible apparatus of destruction, by the side of that patriotic and self-devoted legion.

You most certainly exult, with so many myriads of us, that we really are, at last, in the near prospect of getting rid of a huge mass of pestilential rottenness, declared by its defenders to be an essential part of what is called "the constitution,"—and which may be so for aught I know or care—for neither I nor any body else can tell what that canted and extolled humbug does really consist of. All I know is, that the term has been one of the most available of all the expedients of political delusion.

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CLXIV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, July 16, 1831.*

. . . . I *am* thankful, but wish I were much more so, for such an instance as you mention, on the authority of Mrs. L——, of the valuable effect of which any thing I have written may be made the instrumental mean. When informed of such circumstances, I seem to hear the solemn and warning words, "Lest I be myself a cast-away." I am strongly with you in adverting to the "autumn" of life, and the gradual loss of coevals and friends; and their removal seems needful, in addition to the figured chronicle of time, to make one really see and feel, that the main allotment of life is gone by. The fact and feeling that it is so, often return on me when exulting in the great change so immensely advantageous, as we may surely hope, in the political world. It occurs to me how soon I shall be withdrawn, absolutely and finally, from the scene, and all its events and interests. Still it is for the nation's sake, for mankind's sake, for posterity's sake, an emphatic gratification, to see a long and proudly imperious reign of corruption and iniquity drawing to a close. It is a just, and quite *rational* emotion, that triumphs at the ignominious and irrecoverable prostration of an order of men who have, during so long a domination, been inflicting immeasurable mischief on the nation and the world. How long it has

been to wait for a revolution which, forty years since, many of us fancied to be near at hand; and what an enormity of evil perpetrated during that wide space, in the shapes of war, exhausting profligacy, and all diversities of delusion, oppression, and practised and patronized corruption! And how unexpectedly, how suddenly, has this downfall happened to the arrogant and besotted tribe! Some twenty months since, or less, what ineffable scorn they would have felt for any prophet of such an event. There will not fail to be evils in the new system, but an immense good is gained in the nation's being no longer at the disposal of a class of men, who would willingly sell it to the Devil, if they could be sure of getting payment.\*

\* "Not that I anticipate with much confidence any great benefits to result from the Reform Bill; but the truth is, that we are arrived at one of those periods in the progress of society when the Constitution naturally undergoes a change, just as it did two centuries ago. It was impossible then for the king to keep down the higher part of the middle classes: it is impossible now to keep down the lower and middle parts of them. All that resistance to these natural changes can effect, is to derange their operation, and make them act violently and mischievously instead of healthfully, or at the least harmlessly. The old state of things is gone past all recall, and all the efforts of all the tories cannot save it."—**DR. ARNOLD**, *Life and Correspondence* (April, 1831), vol. i. p. 296.



## CHAPTER VIII.

ILLNESS AND DEATH OF MRS. FOSTER—MR. ANDERSON—  
JOURNEY TO WALES—MR. HUGHES—RAMMOHUNROY—  
LETTERS ON THE CHURCH—ON THE BALLOT—ECLECTIC  
REVIEW—MR. FAWCETT.

1832—1838.

THE ensuing six years formed the saddest period in Foster's life. It began with the fatal illness of her who had been his beloved, affectionate, and invaluable companion for nearly a quarter of a century, and whom he regarded as the cause not only of a very great portion of whatever happiness he had possessed during that long period, but of whatever mental improvement he had made. Her intellect was in an extraordinary degree strong and correct, and for a refined perception and depth of reflective feeling, her husband declared that he had never known her equal.

For several years Mrs. Foster's health had been in a very precarious state, but in the spring of 1832, the symptoms of decline assumed a more decidedly alarming aspect. "The occasion of my walks to Downend,"\* says Mr. Foster, "is a painful one. My estimable wife is there (at her sister Cox's) in a state of great prostration. Some morbid affection, by which she has been suffering many years, interfering with the process of nutrition, and slowly growing worse, without being plainly evident in its nature till within the last year or two, has reduced her within the last few months to a miserably debilitated and emaciated condition,

\* To the Rev. Josiah Hill, May 1, 1832.

and so rapidly at last as to demand a strong medical treatment; a treatment which at the same time her feebleness can very ill sustain. She is assiduously attended by our worthy friend and neighbour, Dr. Bompas; and her brother-in-law, Dr. Stenson, of Bourton, has just now kindly come to be with her a week or two. It is confessedly a case of great doubtfulness and danger, and with no hope of any thing like a *complete* remedy; but not without a hope of such alleviation as may protract for a while her valuable life:—I regret to think of its precariousness even at the best. I will hope the Divine mercy may spare her to us for a while; but fear to look forward. If she do not speedily recover a little strength she must sink, I fear, inevitably. If a few weeks shall by the indulgence of Heaven restore her sufficiently for the journey, she will go to Dr. Stenson's at Bourton, her native place, where she will be daily under the most kind and judicious medical care. . . . I am confident of her safety as to the great final interest; but her removal would be a most mournful dispensation to me, to her children, and to those of her friends who best know her exceeding value. . . . When my apprehensions are gloomy, I sometimes comfort myself by the consideration that at the age of nearly sixty-two I can have no very long time to stay behind. Oh may we all, through the merits of our Redeemer, find ourselves one day where your dear and inestimable wife and son are now enjoying their triumph over mortality, sin, and all evil."

In June, Mrs. Foster performed, though not without difficulty, the journey to Bourton. At times the disorder appeared to be checked; yet the amendment was never so great as to warrant the expectation of recovery: still, no immediate danger was threatened. In the course of a few weeks, however, the intelligence of a marked increase of debility, brought her husband in haste to the scene of

affliction. In a letter to Mr. Anderson, (dated Bourton, July 21), he says, "I had been intending, but not immediately, nor at any exactly determined time, to come hither. The communications from S. were not such as to preclude a small delay, which several points of convenience made of some consequence to me. A letter from him received on Wednesday, described my wife as having been during several days, to the end of the preceding week, remarkably better in all appearance; but as having suffered a diminution of that apparent improvement; and as there would be an exactly opportune conveyance from Cheltenham hither to-day (Friday), he said that he and his patient wished me to avail myself of it, which I instantly determined to do. His letter had come at noon on Wednesday; and when we were just going to bed within a few minutes of midnight, we were surprised and alarmed by Mrs. C. in her carriage, summoning us to be ready to go with her, at that hour, for Bourton; a messenger on horseback having brought a note from S. to her, and one to me, to tell us that it was very desirable we should all go without delay,—though not meaning or expecting we should set off till early in the morning (this was not noted in the letters). We reached here by eight o'clock, and found our dearest human friend something relieved from the state she was in when the messenger was sent off; but I was shocked to see her so utterly worn away—reduced to mere shadow. Her having but four or five days before (as informed by letter) been able to bear being drawn out in a Bath chair for a mile or two, sometimes twice in the day, and able to walk about the house, as she informed me in a letter, with the aid of a stick, had left me unprepared to see her so totally prostrated. She had suffered, in the night of Tuesday, a sudden and formidable recurrence of the worst symptoms. I have never, since the beginning of her illness, been san-

guine of her recovery to even the most moderate degree of any thing like health. Dr. S. plainly told me when at Overn (I requested him to be explicit) that the omens were decidedly stronger on the side of fear than of hope; but he did allow the hope that she might partially and for a while, recover!

"There is no question left now; she is entirely confined to the bed from which I have not the faintest hope she will ever rise again. The internal disorganization has proved itself extreme, and beyond all probability, if not possibility, of repair. She is so feeble as not to be able to converse but for a little while at a time, even though (which is wonderful and merciful) she suffers hardly any thing that can be called *pain*. And evidently she is calmly resigning, quietly withdrawing from, every thing of this world, excepting her affection for us who are to survive her. The change, so mournful to us, will be happy for her. In respect to health her life has been, for many years past, an afflictive one; borne with the greatest fortitude and patience, but requiring a great and constant exertion of those virtues. Partly owing to this invincible ill health, and partly to a pensive tendency of mind, her piety has been often mingled with the more gloomy order of feelings and reflections. From all this I believe she is near a final escape. She *may* linger for weeks; S. says there is no certainty, as to time, in the prognostics. The malady can be somewhat tempered by medical care; but any considerable sudden aggravation of it might be speedily fatal, and against this there is no security on the ground of present signs. I shall of course remain here to await events—how unwilling I am to say, '*the event!*'"

Soon after Mr. Foster's arrival at Bourton, the symptoms of immediate danger were so much diminished, that Mrs. Foster expressed a hope that she should be able to

return shortly to Stapleton. Under these circumstances, Mr. Foster ventured to leave Bourton, and after spending a day or two at Cheltenham, reached home Sept. 7th. In a letter to Mr. Easthope (Sept. 9), he says, "I remember your kind request, at parting, to be informed of any intelligence I might receive of my dear and estimable wife, the pensive thought of whom often came on me amidst our walks and lively dialogues, and comes on me, now that I am in solitude, with habitual impression. I have a letter to-day from Dr. Stenson, describing her situation as not materially different since the day we left Bourton; only he thinks she becomes perceptibly weaker. He thinks she may linger a considerable time, but that a more speedy result, not a quite sudden one, would be no cause for surprise." . . . . In a postscript, he added, "I shall return to Bourton in two or three weeks at most; possibly in a shorter time." The possibility here apprehended, was indeed very soon to be verified. On the following day he wrote to Mr. Hill. "Left quite alone for some hours in the house, I have been walking about the different rooms, and looking at the various objects, the fireplaces, the books, the furniture, the prints suspended round the walls—with the pensive and mournful consideration—'She will see these apartments—will be seen in them—no more.' There is a strange sinking of the heart at the thought.

"I do not at all remember what was the description I gave when I wrote to you from Bourton. It must, I think, have been about that time that she appeared somewhat better; that she *was much* better, as to the original and inveterate malady. . . . . When that malady appeared to be in great measure subdued, by the use of strong medical means, we were beginning to promise ourselves that she would recover strength; and, in fact, she did so, in some degree for a little while; but it appears as if the constitu-

tion had been too completely sapped to leave strength enough for reaction. . . . She happily does not suffer, nor has during all the illness suffered much pain, an exemption for which I am thankful. . . . If the next information be that there is a marked progress of decline, I shall immediately return, to await and attend the last event. I have written to her twice within the three days that I have been here. As our watchmen have now just begun their nightly rounds for the darker half of the year, I shall cease to be in much apprehension for the safety of the house,—a consideration which presses very seriously in the neighbourhood of this city, which the stupid, wretched magistracy leave almost wholly unprotected. There has been a man to come each night to sleep in the house while I have been away; but that is a very imperfect security, and I feel it a cause for thankfulness, and for some degree of wonder, that the house has not been broken into. An outhouse *was* broken open.

“My dear wife is enabled to maintain a calm resignation to the Heavenly Father’s will; and the impending event, so mournful for us, will be to her the entrance on endless felicity. She has long been under the discipline of the Good Spirit; often saying she felt it indispensable that that discipline should be a *hard* process, to subdue the evils of the mind. She has with invincible patience borne ill health, and even been thankful for it sometimes, for its salutary operation. She has also felt, even from childhood, a tendency to gloomy reflections, on the perversities of the heart, the awful mysteries of the divine government of the world, and our unknown future destinies. All this has less beset her during this long affliction than ever before; and from all this she will exultingly escape and emerge at—why do I say I *fear*?—no distant time, in all present probability. But oh, I *should* have been glad to detain her here.

But *she* says, and I would say, 'Thy will be done.'"<sup>\*</sup> But on the very day that these lines were written the mortal conflict terminated. The narrative will be best given in Foster's own words: "I was not allowed," he says,<sup>†</sup> "to stay long at Stapleton: a letter, received from Dr. Stenson on Sunday (Sept. 9), signifying an increase of the fatal indications, had determined me to return hither very shortly, to await the inevitable event. . . . His second letter reached me on Tuesday, with the very unexpected information, that the fatal event was already past. As I had left her in such a remainder of her slowly diminishing strength as to be able to sit up the greater part of each day, I had no impression that she could be so very near the fatal hour, though perfectly convinced it was not very far off: I expected a number of weeks to intervene. She survived the time I left her but four days." . . . "On two or three of those very days she rose from her bed, and passed a considerable time in another room: they informed me she retained the full possession of her faculties to the very last; she partly raised herself in the bed to receive some medical preparation, then lay deliberately down, and in less than ten minutes expired, without the slightest struggle, or apparent suffering of any kind. The event was so sudden that her children, in another part of the house, could not be called into the room before it was passed."<sup>‡</sup> . . . "I have come hither (last night) so considerable a time since the event, that I am dissuaded from seeing, as I wished to do, the deserted mortal relic, which will be removed early the day after to-morrow, and with the very least possible ceremony. If conventional usages did not come obstinately in the way, my infinite preference would be, that the last

\* To the Rev. Josiah Hill, Stapleton, Sept. 10, 1832.

† To J. Easthope, Esq., M.P., Bourton, Sept. 13, 1832.

‡ To Mrs. Saunders, Sept. 29, 1832.

office should be performed at the midnight hour, in perfect silence, and with no attendance besides the parties immediately interested. What have a number of gazing, indifferent spectators to do with my loss, or my demeanour or feeling regarding it?"

In a letter of the same date to another friend, Foster says,\* "I am grateful to Heaven, that from the beginning of her illness quite to the end, she suffered nothing that could be called positive pain. This happily contributed to her maintaining an unalterable patience and tranquillity throughout her whole illness; there was never, I am assured, *one* expression of impatience, murmuring, or fretfulness. She has indeed been always remarkable for a firm and quiet fortitude; and she has had much to require it and try it, through many years of ill health, gradually descending at last, since the beginning of this year to positive illness. When a person's ill health is habitual, one month or year much like another, and complaints seldom and very briefly uttered, it is the fault of associates who are themselves in exempt condition, not to show or feel the due attention and sympathy. And it now comes upon me with some degree of regret and self-reproach, that I too seldom testified the due sympathetic interest on this subject. It was an interest which she most rarely claimed, and therefore should have been the more spontaneously given. It is striking to observe how a thing not felt or thought of as a defect or fault toward a friend alive, rises up into a palpable reproach when that friend has gone beyond the reach of receiving affectionate attentions any more. Not that I am deeply accusing myself in this respect: I loved and valued her deeply, cordially, and continually, and delighted to reciprocate her devoted affection; but it is strange to observe how any thing that was *less* than the most watchful

\* To B. Stokes, Esq.



attention to what she suffered from constantly defective health can now come back to memory as a cause of regret.

"It excites a pensive emotion to take back, just now, some small things which I left in her keeping when I set off for Cheltenham; and still more so to receive back *unopened* two letters which I wrote to her, of a consolatory nature, within the first three days that I was at Stapleton, —*both* of which arrived here after she had departed;—but, therefore, after she had ceased to need human sympathy and consolation. I am not sure that I shall ever open them.

" . . . . It has been an extremely advantageous circumstance for my wife, and for those who have had the principal care of attendance on her, that the period of her illness was appointed to fall on exactly the finest, brightest, and warmest part of the year—from May to September; during which, besides the nights being so short,—she had, and greatly enjoyed, the exhilaration of being drawn out, about the garden and the vicinity, in a Bath chair, admiring the flowers, and refreshed by the fine air and sunshine, which I really believe she had not enjoyed so much during several whole years before. Here too she had the utmost advantage of medical skill and care every day and hour, and of all manner of affectionate attendance and accommodation. On account of the girls especially, it is a very favourable circumstance that her decease took place here, instead of home, thus averting one melancholy association which would have fixed itself inseparably and permanently on the place."

It is very gratifying to record a spontaneous and truly delicate tribute of respect paid at this season of sorrow by persons most of whom had little acquaintance with the bereaved family beyond what arose from having lived in the same vicinity;—a beautiful contrast to the

vulgar curiosity usually excited by such events, and to what the heart of the mourner equally shrinks from, a busy, ostentatious, garrulous condolence. "The last offices were rendered," says Mr. Foster,\* "on Saturday. I think I expressed in my last my extreme repugnance to a large assemblage of indifferent spectators. This feeling by some means became known in the village; and I have to mention it as a very singular mark of delicacy and respect, that the inhabitants all, with hardly an exception, stayed away; so that, excepting the persons whose services were necessary, none but a very few from some distance, unapprised of the preventive consideration, were at the spot. I shall charge Mrs. Stenson to find means to make it known that the people have my acknowledgments for this unexpected kindness."

On Foster's return to Stapleton, he wrote immediately to Mr. Hill, with whom his friendship had acquired a deeper and melancholy interest, from the striking coincidences in their domestic trials. "I have returned *hither*," he says, "but have an utter repugnance to say—returned *home*; that name is applicable no longer.—You may be sure I am grateful for your kind sympathy and suggestions of consolation; not the less so for its being too true, that there is a weight on the heart which the most friendly human hand cannot remove. The melancholy fact is, that my beloved,—inestimable companion has left me. It comes upon me—in evidence how various and sad! And yet, for a moment, sometimes, I feel as if I could not realize it as true. There is something that seems to say,—*Can* it be that I shall see her no more;—that I shall still, one day after another, find she is not here; that her affectionate voice and look will never accost me; the kind grasp of her hand never more be felt; that when I would be

\* To J. Easthope, Esq., Bourton, Sept. 17, 1832.

glad to consult her, make an observation to her, address to her some expression of love, call her 'my dear wife,' as I have done so many thousand times, it will be in vain—she is not here? Several times, a considerable number—even since I followed her to the tomb,—a momentary suggestion of thought has been, as one and another circumstance has occurred, 'I will tell Maria of this.' Even this very day, when I parted with Dr. Stenson, who out of pure kindness accompanied me a long stage on the road, there was actually for a transient instant a lapse of mind into the idea of telling her how very kind he had been. I have not suffered, nor expect to feel, any overwhelming emotions, any violent excesses of grief; what I expect to feel is, a long repetition of pensive monitions of my irreparable loss; that the painful truth will speak itself to me again, and still again, in long succession, often in solitary reflection (in which I feel the most), and often as objects come in my sight, or circumstances arise, which have some association with her who is gone. The things which belong to her with a personal appropriation; things which she used or particularly valued; things which she had given me, or I had given her; her letters, or my own to her; the corner of the chamber where I know she used to pray; her absence—unalterable absence—at the hour of family worship, of social reading, of the domestic table; her no more being in her place to receive me on my return home from occasional absence; the thought of what she would have said, or how she would have acted, on subjects or occasions that come in question; the remembrance how she *did* speak or act in similar instances;—all such things as these will renew the pensive emotions, and tell me still again what I have lost,—what that was, and how great its value, which the Sovereign Disposer has in his unerring wisdom taken

away. Yes, it is *He* that has taken away what it was *He* that gave me, and what was so dear and valuable to me; and I would not, I think I do not, rebel against his dispensation; I would not even repine or complain beyond that degree which he will regard with a merciful compassion. I should, and would, be thankful for having been indulged with the possession so long. Certainly neither of us would, if such an exception *might* be made to an eternal law, recall our dear departed companions from their possession of that triumph over sin, and sorrow, and death, to which they have been exalted. However great our deprivation, how transcendently greater is their advancement in the condition of existence! And we should be unworthy to be loved by them still, as I trust that even at this very hour we are, if we could for a moment entertain such a wish.

. . . . "I do hope that through the mercy of the Father of Spirits even this loss shall be turned to gain to myself and the children, the care of whom now devolves on me in a much greater degree than heretofore. I hope that the solemn and affectionate thought of her who has gone from us, will, for each of us, give a powerful reinforcement to every admonition and persuasion of religion; that the aspiration, 'May we meet her again, where friends will part no more,' will often be an affecting motive to follow in the path by which she has gone to immortal happiness. What an inestimable advantage it is, for the effect of instruction to her daughters, that she can with perfect confidence, be cited to them, and recalled by their own thoughts, as a nearly faultless pattern, in both judgment and conduct. Her intellect was strong and disciplined; her course of action was invariably conscientious in the highest degree;—her piety was deep and reflective,—bearing, however, very much from this reflectiveness itself, a somewhat more melancholy tinge than

I would desire for her daughters.—In thinking of them, I will not dwell on the consideration,—how different to their juvenile feelings, after a while, will be this loss, from what it must continue to be to mine. May God enable us, my dear friend, with ever increasing force of faith, to commit ourselves and our children to his mercy and his power.”

In the summer of 1833 Mr. Foster made a second excursion into North Wales. Previously, however, he suffered another painful loss in the removal of Mr. Anderson, with whom (though their acquaintance was of comparatively recent date) he was on terms, as has been already noticed, of most cordial intimacy, and whose abilities and character he held in very high esteem. “I expect to set off for Worcester, he says,\* “on the expedition to North Wales to-morrow evening, and shall be absent, I am afraid, not less than about four weeks. I have little spirit or inclination for such an adventure; but ever since the former one (just twenty-one years back!) there has been an understanding between friend Stokes and me, that some time or other, if life continued, we were to do the same thing once more; and lately he wrote to me, that there occurred just now a more favourable opportunity, with respect to the mode of conveyance, than he could expect again; and that, as we are growing old, the thing must be ‘soon or never.’ I consented; not without a wish that it could rather have been left to the uncertainties of *another* year.

“I may well say—‘uncertainties,’—for how little, at this time last year, did I anticipate, that in less than twelve short months more, that most valuable friend, Anderson, would be in his grave!—His health was habitually not good; but such common things as head-aches and disorders of the stomach, are not held to be omens of a man’s not

\* To the Rev. Josiah Hill, June 27, 1833.

living to complete his forty-ninth year. Till *very* near the end there was not, that I know of, any suspicion of disorder decidedly organic; but the *post mortem* examination disclosed an inveterate disease of the *omentum*, and a morbid state of the liver, of which latter, indeed, there was some previous evidence within the last few weeks. Though a severe attack of the influenza was deemed to have accelerated the mortal process, Dr. Prichard pronounced, after the examination, that the inveterate disease would, in no long time, have been mortal. He (Anderson) was over here only ten days before his death; refused the offer of a friend, who brought him in a fly, to procure another for his return, but suffered much in walking home; and, from that time (though for several days he had the students to attend him at his own house) he rapidly sunk, with little pain, however, into a state of utter debility and prostration. When I saw him the day before his death, he could not speak much above a whisper. Dr. P., who came while I was with him, said there were some indications more favourable than on the preceding day, but whether he retained any hope of the patient's continued amendment I do not know; Anderson himself did not show any consciousness that he was past recovery to the last, I was told. His mind was uniformly tranquil, and the attendants said he retained his faculties till within two hours of the end, during which he was so gradually and quietly sinking, that it was hardly perceptible when he actually expired. Dr. P. attended him most assiduously, with all the kind anxiety of an affectionate friend.

“Every friend sympathizes with the family; but the great irreparable loss is to the Academy, which his able and indefatigable exertions had contributed to render, beyond all comparison, more efficient to its object than it has ever been before at any time since its institution. I have no

doubt, that during the time of his tutorship, the young men have made more real improvement (the measure and manner of acquirement being taken into account) in *one* year, than they usually did before in *four*, or certainly in *three*. He assisted and excited their minds in other ways, in every way, as well as in the bare specific business of learning; and never spared himself any labour by which he could hope to benefit them. He had a strong and sagacious intellect, and the extent of his acquirements was quite wonderful, especially considering that he had had but very slender advantages in his early life. He possessed a genuine, habitual, and rational piety; and was *very* benevolent, in spite of a certain acerbity and sometimes roughness of manner, which made some people afraid of him, and others not to like him. The sense of his worth, however, had progressively gained ground, though but few comparatively, even to the last, were *fully* apprized of it”\*

In a letter to Mr. Stokes, who had requested Foster to commit to writing his recollections of their journey in the principality, he says, “As to any sketches of our long and

\* The Rev. William Anderson was born October 18, 1784, at Durno, in the parish of Garioch, Aberdeenshire; his parents were pious members of the Church of Scotland. For several years he was first a scholar, and then a teacher in a sabbath evening-school at Aberdeen. When scarcely seventeen he became a member of the Independent Church meeting in George Street. Two years later he adopted antipædobaptist views, and was baptized in the river Don by the Rev. T. Edmonds, since of Cambridge, who was then a student at the University. In February, 1804, he removed to London, and in the following year entered the Bristol Baptist College, where he continued to the close of 1808. After leaving Bristol he preached for some time at Devonport, then at Kialingbury, near Northampton; and in 1809 settled at Dunstable, where he remained sixteen years, till his removal to Bristol in 1825. While at Dunstable, in addition to his pastoral duties, he contributed several articles to the Eclectic Review, wrote a “History of the Russian Empire,” and republished, with notes and a second part, an extract from Jeremy Taylor’s “Liberty of Prophecy,” under the title of “The Baptists Justified.” For a very able and interesting sketch of Mr. Anderson’s life and character, the reader is referred to a memoir inserted in the Baptist Magazine, Oct. and Nov. 1833.

delightful tour I have entirely failed. I found it in vain to call on my memory to fill up, in even the most meagre manner, what was very little more than a mere marking of the names of the successive places that distinguished our stages. That most excellent tactic of our captain to have us off always in the early morning, gave no time for memoranda in the beginning of the day, and at the end of it one was fit for nothing but to go to sleep. It was truly a fine and luxurious excursion. In a favourable hour for recalling the distant and the past, one can bring to the 'mind's eye' many spectacles and forms of sublimity and beauty, among the latter never forgetting the millions of fox-gloves, honeysuckles, and wild-roses. These have bloomed on my imagination ever since. . . . Taken altogether, the tour was a vastly gratifying adventure; portions and scenes of it, sometimes one and sometimes another, return on my imagination with a very pleasing interest. It combined many circumstances and advantages which can very rarely come so fortunately together. I do not know that it was the less interesting to me for the thought which was often suggested in the striking or beautiful situations, 'I shall see this no more.' There was another pensive sentiment in regard to my return home; it was *no longer home* in the same sense as it had been on the return from absences and excursions in former years. If I was to see no more the interesting objects beheld in the journey, I was also, to see no more the person who was always before ready to receive me with an affectionate welcome. She was gone to behold scenes, how amazingly different from all that we were contemplating! But we also, my dear friend, are going fast on our way in the same journey, toward the same mysterious regions. What a different kind and degree of emotion, surprise, amazement, awaits us there, from all that we have ever felt in the view of these terrestrial scenes!"



Information reached Mr. Foster on his return from Wales of another approaching bereavement, which must have affected him more deeply than any save that *one*, a sense of which never left him even in his most cheerful and social moments. "Our old and most excellent friend Hughes," he says to Mr. Coles,\* "is still lingering on the very verge—and with what a happy prospect beyond! To-day I received from him a message conveyed in a note from his son to Mr. Cottle, expressing a wish to hear from me once more, a last expression of the friendship of forty years. I shall write this final adieu as to this world with very pensive feelings, but with congratulation on both his retrospect and his prospect. He has been eminently faithful in the great Master's service. How striking to consider what our valued friends, one after another, are gone to see and are going to see! And oh! what is that scene, that manner, that felicity of existence, which some of them now possess, and this one friend more is, at the utmost, but a few short weeks at a distance from? . . . It is a strikingly sensible, specific, and attractive point of relation to the other world, that we acquire by the fact that some of those are there whom we have valued and loved so recently here.

"At your age (though a number of years beyond that of Mr. Anderson) it is to be hoped that a very considerable tract of time remains for useful service. At mine any probable calculation becomes reduced to a very narrow space. But for having looked to see the day of the month in order to date this letter, the day would have passed off without my being aware that it is the day that completes my sixty-third year, what is denominated *the grand climacteric*. I deeply deplore not having lived to worthier purpose, both for myself and others; and earnestly hope and pray that whatever of life remains, may be employed

\* Sept. 17, 1833. Mr. Hughes died Oct. 3.

much more faithfully to the great end of existence. But with this self-condemning review, and with nothing but an uncertain and possibly small remainder of life in prospect, how emphatically oppressive would be the conscious situation, if there were not that great propitiation, that redeeming sacrifice, to rest upon for pardon and final safety."

The deeply pensive impression made on Foster's mind by his great domestic bereavement, and the removal of Hall and Anderson, so soon to be followed by that of Hughes, was prolonged by another similar event, one not involving, it is true, a dissolution of intimate friendship, or even of long acquaintance, but yet fitted, from the juncture at which it happened, and the interesting character and position of the individual, to excite no ordinary emotion. "The most remarkable thing of late," Foster says in a letter to Mr. Hill (Oct. 8, 1833), "is the visit, so soon to end in the death, in the house behind our garden, of the Rajah Ram-mohunroy (the title of Rajah, of no very defined import, was conferred on him by the king of Delhi, the remaining shadow of the great Mogul). I had entertained a strong prepossession against him, had no wish to see him, but could not avoid it, when he was come to the house of our young landlady, Miss Castle.

"My prejudice could not hold out half an hour after being in his company. He was a very pleasing and interesting man; intelligent and largely informed, I need not say—but unaffected, friendly, and, in the best sense of the word, polite. I passed two evenings in his company, only, however, as an unit in large parties; the latter time, however, in particular and direct conversation with him, concerning some of the doctrines of the Indian philosophers, the political, civil, and moral state of the Hindoos. In the former instance, when the after-dinner company

consisted of Dr. Carpenter, and sundry other doctors and gentlemen, churchmen and dissenters, he was led a little into his own religious history and present opinions. He avowed his general belief in Christianity as attested by miracles (of which I had understood that he made very light some ten or a dozen years since), but said that the internal evidence had had by much the greatest force on his mind. In so very heterogeneous a company, there was no going into any very specific particulars. Carpenter, in whose company I have since dined at Dr. Prichard's, very confidently claims him as of the 'modern Unitarian' school. . . . It may be that he was finally near about in agreement with that school, but I do not believe that they have any exact knowledge of his opinions. . . . Here he went to several churches, and to hear Jay on a week-day at Bridge Street, as well as sometimes to Lewin's Mead, where the family in which he was visiting constantly attend. There is, or a few days since there was, a great perplexity how to dispose of his remains.\* He had signified his wish not to be committed to any *ecclesiastical* burying-ground, but, if it

\* "The knowledge that the rajah had, in various ways, manifested solicitude to preserve his caste with a view both to his usefulness and to the security of his property, and the belief that it might be endangered if he were buried among other dead, or with Christian rites, operated to prevent the interment of his remains in any of the usual cemeteries. Besides this, the rajah had repeatedly expressed the wish, that in case of his dying in England, a small piece of freehold ground might be purchased for his burying place, and a cottage be built on it for the gratuitous residence of some respectable poor person to take charge of it. Every difficulty however, was removed by the offer of Miss Castle . . . to appropriate to the object a beautifully adapted spot, in a shrubbery near her lawn, and under some fine elms. There this revered and beloved person was interred on the 18th of October, about two P.M. The coffin was borne on men's shoulders, without a pall, and deposited in the grave, without any ritual and in silence. . . . Those who followed him to the grave, and sorrowed there, were his son and two native servants, the members of the families of Stapleton Grove and Bedford Square, the guardians of Miss Castle, and two of her nearest relatives, Mr. Estlin, Mr. Foster, and Dr. Jerrard, together with several ladies."—*Dr. Carpenter's Discourse, Appendix, p. 122.*

might be so managed, deposited in some quiet corner of the mere *profane* earth. His principal London friend (a Mr. Hare from India), thinks it the most desirable that he were conveyed to India. During the greater part of his short illness (it was an affection of the brain), he was in a state of such torpor as to be incapable of any communication. Dr. Prichard, who attended him during the latter days, says, he did not utter, while he was with him, ten distinct sentences. As far as I have heard there was *nothing* said to indicate the state of his mind. There were actions (of his hands, &c.) which his own attendants said were the usual ones that accompanied his devotional exercises. To me, and several of our order of friends, who were, the latter evening to which I have referred (at Mrs. Cox's) in such close and interesting conversation with him, then apparently in perfect health, but then within hardly two days of the commencement of his fatal illness, it was emphatically striking, nine or ten days after, to think of him as no longer in our world. This event, together with the almost sudden removal of Anderson (and if my old friend from youth, Hughes, be not already gone, he is on the very last brink of life), seem to press on me, with a *tangible presence*, as it were, of the other world. And then where is *she* that was with me so lately? so lately—for it is amazing how rapidly thirteen months have passed away—*where* is she? and where is, my dear friend, your beloved companion that *was*—but that *will be again*? May Heaven prepare us to meet them erewhile, with ecstatic joy—joy to *them*, as well as to us; for with rapturous emotion, they will welcome, when they arrive, those whom they have left behind!" . . .

The Serampore controversy, in addition to his domestic concerns, so fully absorbed Foster's attention, that for nearly nine years he prepared nothing for the press, with the exception of the "Observations on Mr. Hall as a

Preacher," and a new edition (the ninth) of the Essays after subjecting them to a final revision at the suggestion of Mr. Anderson, "the acute literary friend" alluded to in the preface; besides two letters on the Church and the Voluntary Principle, which appeared in the Morning Chronicle, Oct. 2 and 3, 1834; and five letters on the Ballot to the editor of the same Journal, in 1835.

In 1837, when the Eclectic Review passed into the hands of its present editor, Foster allowed his name to stand in the list of contributors, but without pledging himself to more than an occasional article. In writing to Dr. Price, (Feb. 24, 1837), he says, "Not one of the Oxford Tracts has come in my way. There is a dozen of the men named in your muster-roll, much more qualified than I am, to take account of such a business. But has that little knot of Papists any such hold on any considerable section of the 'religious public,' as fairly to call for a *dissenting* proclamation against them? In so recluse a life, I have very little information about the dimensions in which any religious or church peculiarity stands before the public. I very rarely see any of the contemporary publications of *any* kind, in books or periodicals, with the exception of the two leading Quarterly Reviews. . . . I am sorry to be making this sort of pleading off. I did, however, when you were here, represent (I think very expressly) that I could not engage myself for more than a very inconsiderable and unfrequent quantum of service. If I can, or rather *could*, do any thing in the composition way, there are some tasks for a more permanent purpose which I ought to attempt; and am mortified to have, from year to year, left untouched, partly from the miserable laboriousness to me of any sort of composition, and partly from a haunting consciousness of incompetence.

. . . . "As to *reading*, why one can read little else than  
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the newspapers just at present. I do not know whereabouts, on the thermometer, you may be in political concerns; if high, you will have exulted at the division in the House of Commons, which I have but just now seen in the *Morning Chronicle*.\* To say that the present crisis is most portentous, is no common-place extravagance of phrase; for evidently the consequences will, ere long, be dreadful, if, by the resistance of the execrable tory and church faction, the measures in favour of Ireland shall continue to be frustrated."

Within the period to which this part of the memoir relates, Foster was deprived of his only brother, and of one of his few early associates. "As to companions and friends of early times," he says,† "they have almost all left the world. My only brother (the only one who lived to maturity) died a year and some months since,‡ my junior by several years. I had not seen him for more than thirty years, having never, during all that time, revisited my native place in Yorkshire. Now I probably never shall; for the only other person, with whom I had maintained any communication, Mr. Fawcett (son of Dr. Fawcett, my old tutor), a friend of my youth, of about the same age, and a very valuable man, lately went the way of all the earth. The unlooked-for intelligence did cause me a very pensive feeling; it broke the last link of my connection with the scenes and society of my early life; all would be strange and foreign to me if I were to go thither now; very few persons alive with whom I was ever in any sense acquainted; perhaps not one with whom it would not be mutually a difficult effort to retrace any thing in person that either had

\* Lord F. Egerton's motion, for the abolition instead of the amendment of the Irish Municipal Corporations, which, after three nights' debate, was rejected by 322 to 242.

† To the Rev. Josiah Hill, Feb. 22, 1838.

‡ June 19, 1836, aged 61.

ever seen above. The very localities, I am told by one who has rather lately been there, are strangely transformed:—roads turned; woods cut down; free open tracts occupied and built upon; romantic glens, where I had so many solitary rambles along by their wild brooks, *profaned*, as I should then have called it, if I could have anticipated such a change, by manufactories, and the swarming, noisy activity of a population of a temperament infinitely alien from reflective, pensive, and imaginative musings.

“It is in vain to wonder—on supposition those scenes had *not* become changed, and that I were now to revisit them, and wander alone a number of hours in one or another of them—how I should feel now in comparison (if I had remembrance enough to make the comparison) with the feelings of those times. But how emphatic would the consciousness be, that though *they* were the same, *I* was prodigiously changed! Though the feelings of the early time might have often been pensive, tinged with a degree of melancholy, still there was the vital *substratum*, so to call it, of youth and anticipation. An interval of more than forty years makes all the difference between the morning of life and its evening; the mind, in the one position, occupied with imagination, conjecture, possibilities, resolutions, hopes;—in the other, looking back to see that visionary speculation reduced to the humility of an experience and reality, in which there is much to regret and much for self-reproach; and looking forward to behold, in near approach, *another* future, of how different an aspect from that presented to the youthful spirit! Here, my friend, we stand, yourself at no great distance behind me. What a solemn and mighty difference it is, that whereas we *then* beheld LIFE before us, we now behold DEATH. Oh, what cause for earnest care, and strife, and supplication to Heaven; that when the moment comes, which every moment is bringing

nearer, that we shall have passed that portentous shade, and behold the amazing prospect beyond it opening upon us, it may present itself under the light of the divine mercy, beaming upon us from Him who has the keys of death and the invisible world."

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## LETTERS.

CLXV. TO THE REV. THOMAS COLES.

*Bourton, September 13, 1832.*

In addressing to you a few lines in relation to the mournful scene in which we are to be indebted to your kindness on Saturday, I entreat you to let me fully assure myself you will not feel as if I were assuming to *prescribe* to you in your ministerial character, while I just take the liberty of saying what are the feelings and wishes of all the family party, and emphatically my own. These wishes would be that the service might be brief, and with *the least possible of any personal references*.

I am perfectly sure that the dear deceased would have earnestly deprecated any marked reference to *her*; and as to the survivors, all of them, and myself especially—I need not say you can perfectly understand that it is a sorrow that seeks privacy, that earnestly shrinks from public gaze and curiosity.

But for the consideration of what is conventionally regarded as due on such an occasion, my own preference—I may say infinite preference—would be that it were an office performed at midnight, in perfect silence, and with no attendance but that of the parties immediately concerned. The vulgarizing curiosity, what will be said of the deceased—how the survivors comport themselves, whether they appeared distressed or stoical—which of them the most or least—and all the other circumstances of the occasion—are repugnant and irksome in the last degree. Therefore



the utmost brevity and abstinence from personal references that can comport with what you can feel the propriety of the occasion is what we shall feel very grateful to you to maintain. In any reference to the relatives, in the address or in the prayer, will you permit me to entreat it of your friendship not to individualize? Any distinct pointed reference to me individually—though I most sincerely believe that no man in the world would do it with more delicacy and kind appropriateness than yourself—would be extremely painful, so that I should earnestly wish each sentence and each word to be the last. If you should even think this a morbid excess, yet let me entreat your kind indulgence to the weakness: there is, at any rate, no affectation in it. . . .

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## CLXVI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Bourton, September 13, 1832*

. . . . It has repeatedly occurred to my thoughts that there is something remarkably parallel between your experience and mine. You lost a favourite son of just, I think, the same age as mine, and within a short interval of the same time. The duration of my happy union was nearly twenty-five years; must not that have been *very* nearly the same term as in your case? Were not you the senior to your wife by a few years? So was I. Mine departed at just the age of fifty-six—how near that was your wife?—probably a few years less;—perhaps, indeed, hardly fifty. Even you are *approaching* old age,—though I suppose some years short of sixty-two. Both our dear wives left us at what might, in a certain comparative sense, be called an *immature* age; from fifty to fifty-six may be so accounted. Both our wives suffered a protracted decline. Were not you absent at the exact moment that yours expired—or at least, when she could speak to you no more? Each of us has two surviving children. I need not add, that we both deeply loved them, were beloved tenderly by them—have a perfect assurance they are now celestially happy—would not recall them if we could—hope to meet them again in eternal affection.

Do advert *distinctly* to each of these conjectures when you shall favour me with a letter. I hope we shall return to Stapleton in less than a week. And a letter received from you *there*, as in a *comparative* solitude, will be of more value to me than received during the divers arrangements for moving which will occupy the interval here, after the last sad transaction.

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## CLXVII. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

October 19, 1832.

. . . . If you had been personally acquainted with her whom the sovereign Disposer, in perfect wisdom and goodness I know, has taken from me, after a happy union of very nearly a quarter of a century, you would have had the most perfect evidence of the eminent value which you ascribe to her, chiefly on my own constant testimony.

She was in all respects eminently estimable. Her intellect was of superior order; clear, sagacious, and of extensive application. Her perception (that which belongs to taste and feeling rather than to bare understanding) was exquisitely just and discriminative. She was conscientious in all things; and a habitual piety pervaded her thoughts and her life. But that piety was of a nature involving much that was pensive and even painful. She constantly said that a hard discipline had been requisite to establish and maintain its predominance in her spirit. It was apt to be invaded by gloomy sentiments respecting the awful moral condition of our nature, and the tremendously mysterious economy of the divine government of this world. This tendency, existing in a considerable degree from even childhood, was no doubt augmented by her long ill health. The exercise of faith in the divine goodness was therefore, often a painful struggle, requiring a resolute effort, to repress the propensity to wide and gloomy speculation, and to preserve that submissive humility, which, however, she *was* enabled to preserve in an exemplary degree. She was rigorous in judging of herself, while (though of very fastidious taste) candid in judging of others—increasingly so, she would say,

the longer she lived, and the more she reflected on the evils of her own mind. But she has passed out of this sphere of darkness, and now exults in a final deliverance from all that affects the body or the mind. . . .

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## CLXVIII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

October 29, 1832.

. . . . Your letter, like the preceding ones, is greatly in sympathy with my own state and feelings. I earnestly hope there will be the same conformity in that most important point that you mention—namely, a *spiritually beneficial* result of the painful visitation; and I hope I may say that thus far it *has* been so; but am very solicitous it may be so in permanent continuance, to the very end of life;—“solicitous”—I have good reason to say, when I recollect, with deep regret, how many former admonitions (but none so impressive and affecting as this) have gradually lost their efficacy. A certain conscious tendency to religious inertness has sometimes brought to me the menacing suggestion, that I *needed* some more solemn and striking measure of discipline from the Father of Spirits to rouse and impel me. I had even sometimes, since my loved wife’s decline in health became more sensible and threatening, had the pensive thought—“Suppose she should be soon taken from me—how should I feel *that* as an admonitory chastisement?—may not *that* be inflicted upon me, to bring me nearer to God and heaven; to excite me to pass the residue of my time with a most constant, earnest reference to eternity?” That *reverting to the past*—living more in the past—which you describe as your experience, is *partly* realized in mine, and probably will be more so. There *is* a strong tendency backward to the periods and scenes and incidents spread over the long space of the more than thirty years of our mutual attachment; a recollection vivified at times by a look into one and another of the five hundred and more letters of our correspondence. But as yet, this reverting tendency is often interfered with by amazement at the present; by a feeling—is it possible that

the relation between us is so changed,—is become so *stupendously* different? Can it be—how is it—what is it—that we are now not inhabitants of the same world—that each has to think of the other as in a perfectly different economy of existence? Whither is she gone—in what manner does she consciously realize to herself the astonishing change—how does she look at herself as no longer inhabiting a mortal tabernacle—in what manner does she recollect her state as only a few weeks since—in what manner does she think, and feel, and act, and communicate with other spiritual beings—what manner of vision has she of God and the Saviour of the world—how does she review and estimate the course of discipline through which she had been prepared for the happy state where she finds herself—in what manner does she look back on *death*, which she has so recently passed through,—and does she plainly *understand* the nature of a phenomenon so awfully mysterious to the view of mortals? How does she remember and feel respecting *us*, respecting *me*? Is she associated with the spirits of her departed son, and two children who died in infancy? Does she indulge with delight a confident anticipation that we shall, after a while, be added to her society? If she should think of it as, with respect to some of us, many years, possibly, before such an event, does that appear a *long* time in prospect, or has she begun to account of duration according to the great laws of eternity? Earnest imaginings and questionings like these arise without end; and still, still, there is no answer, no revelation. The mind comes again and again up close to the thick black veil; but there is no perforation, no glimpse. She that loved me, and I trust loves me still, will not, cannot, must not, answer me. I can only imagine her to say, “Come and see; serve our God so that you shall come and share, at no distant time.” One of the most striking circumstances to my thought and feeling is, that, in devotional exercises, though she comes on my mind in a more affecting manner than perhaps ever, *I have no longer to pray for her*. By a momentary lapse of thought I have been, I think, several times on the point of falling into an expression for her as if still on earth; and the instant “No! no more for *her*,” has been an emotion of pain, and as it were dis-

appointment; till the thought has come, "*She* needs not; she is now safe, beyond the sphere of mortals and their dangers and wants, in the *possession* of all that prayer implored." Even *after* this consolatory thought there has been a pensive trace of feeling, something like pain, that sympathy, care for her welfare, should now be superfluous to her and finally extinguished.

You mentioned having, in your recollections, felt a degree of compunction for not having been as sedulous as you now feel you might have been, to promote the spiritual welfare of your dear departed companion. I believe I have more cause for such regret, and it invades me sometimes in a painful degree. Both my beloved associate and myself had the disadvantage of a naturally and habitually reserved disposition. Mine had been confirmed such by my having been during all the earlier part of my life, very much a solitary being, and during many years a kind of wanderer in the earth, under circumstances which could have left no youthful promptitude to frank and, as it were, *necessary* ingenuousness (if I had ever had it) at the age of thirty-seven, when the domestic union took place. This caused a certain inaptitude on my part, to full habitual communicativeness on the subject of religion as *personally* applied, and, of consequence, a very great defect of habitual effort to render such religious aid as I often, even then, felt that I ought, to my dear companion. I have sometimes now, therefore, a self-reproachful reflection, which would go into something like a wish that she could be with me again for a while, in order that I might repair that great deficiency in *such a manner as her loss makes me feel that I ought to have been of this value to her*. That the fault is now irreparable, absolutely and finally so, is, at times, a very painful thought. The consolation is, that she had a *divine* instructor, and that the great object is accomplished. This, however, does not suppress the regret that she does not, in that happy state, *owe more to me*. The thought sometimes arises in my mind, in what manner, divested of all mutual regret, may we revert to this in our communicated reminiscences in that happy world, if, as I earnestly hope, I shall meet her there again, to be separated no more? There is this thought again—"What joy

it will be to her if I, and if the children, shall then have to tell her and prove to her, that the sad event of our losing her has been rendered, by the divine Spirit, a powerful mean toward our better progress in that piety which shall have prepared us for the happy reunion." . . .

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## CLXIX. TO SIR J. EASTHOPE, BART.

*Stapleton, Feb. 8, 1833.*

. . . . For myself, when I look at the dreadful array of affairs which our legislators have before them, and pressing on them close, and thick, and immediate, I am the reverse of sanguine, whether I regard the question of *power* or of *will*. There is that most appalling state of Ireland. I have no degree of confidence that the ministry have even the *will* to adopt the bold, and radical, and comprehensive measures which alone could avail there. How obvious is the necessity for some imperious enactment, to compel that base, detestable landed interest, to take the burden of the poor, instead of driving them out to famish, beg, or rob, and murder, on the highway; or throwing them by tens of thousands on our coast, to devour the means of support to our own population. It would be a measure which would first astound, but speedily enrage, the whole selfishly base proprietary of Ireland. I have no hope that the ministry have the resolution for so mighty a stroke: and then the Irish *church*. The plain sense of the thing is, that about two-thirds, or rather four-fifths of it, ought to be cut down at once, and that proportion of the property applied to national uses. But the very notion of such a thing would be enough to consign — to one of the wards in St. Luke's. And what would — say, if Lord Grey dared even to whisper such a thing to him? And yet, unless some such thing be done, it is as clear as noon-day, that Ireland will continue a horrid scene of distraction and misery; growing, month by month, more ferociously barbarous, and to be kept down by nothing but the terror and occasional exploits of an immense standing army, at the cost, too, of this our own tax-consuming country.

. . . . The session now opening will be of immense interest: it is an anxious and fearful question,—“What will the government have done by this day seven months?”

But, my dear friend, how many persons, who may now be taking a deep interest in this prospective speculation, are not to stay long enough in this world to see that question answered; and how much more solemn a question it is to the individuals themselves?—what their state, their feelings, their views, will be in a world elsewhere. Few persons at this time last year, could take a deeper interest in the great reform measure, and the results to be hoped for from it than she who was then my wife; but she did not stay to witness any of those results, she was destined to behold something incomparably more new, and wonderful, and delightful, than any thing that *can* come to pass in this land or on this planet; but how dark a veil on the whole economy of that other world! my thoughts go again and again, without end, into the unanswered and unanswerable questions:—where and what is the region, what the manner of existence, what the visions, the emotions, the employment of that other life; and what the comparison between it and the life and the world from which the spirit has passed away? The impatiently inquiring thoughts are still constantly sent back to this one consideration, that in due time we shall ourselves go to see; and who knows how soon that time may come? At my age it cannot, at all events, be very remote; and I am incessantly admonished how fast the successive portions of time are vanishing. I am almost surprised to think, that it is this day five months since my inestimable companion left me; and thus, my dear friend, what may remain to us of life will rapidly pass away; our months, our years, if years remain, will each be gone almost before we are aware; and, unless we become more seriously and anxiously vigilant, *without our having improved them to the great last purpose of life*. I am often painfully, and even alarmingly, admonished of this last most pressing consideration; and, I trust, my dear friend, it will henceforth press on *your* mind also with all its force; and do not let your unsatisfactory remembrances of the past produce any despondent feeling, while there is every divine assistance, so fully and

mercifully offered and promised, to sincere determination and effort. Every unfavourable habit *can* be corrected; every injurious influence can be counteracted; religion *can* make us happy; and I earnestly and confidently hope that it will. . . . .

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## CLXX. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

June 27, 1833.

. . . . . I have left no space of paper for commenting on your citations of high authorities for my indoctrination in theology, in reference to the oracles stated to have been pronounced by Watson. I never thought of questioning the fact, that many pious men have had and have, in respect to their being in a state of acceptance and salvation, a certain testimony *in feeling*, not very definable, and (I would not say *independent* of, but) distinguishable from, a deliberate account taken of evidences, by what may be called a sober, investigating self-examination; but certainly there are many genuine Christians who have *not*, to their own consciousness, this happy kind of testimony; and inasmuch as there is here a very great and *dangerous liability to delusion*, it must surely be unwise and pernicious to be insisting on this to the neglect or exclusion (as W. was reported to me to have done) of all strict inquisition into the evidences of a definable, and so to call it, tangible kind. Have you not seen cause to believe, that in your connexion this has been, to very many, a fatal mischief?

. . . . . I am very sincerely sorry for the calamity of so prodigious a loss as you are suffering in preachers; and, may I say, *not* sorry to hear, that in other respects, your denomination is so flourishing. . . . .

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## CLXXI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

July, 1833.

. . . . . My delay in writing has been owing to an inconsiderable cause—that I would not write till I could men-



tion that a parcel had been sent or was immediately to be sent from here. . . . The thing to be packed was Brucker's *Historia Philosophiæ*, in six quartos, a work of established reputation and immense learning. A number of years since I had it from Longman's—a fool was I, at my age, and with fast failing sight, to think of such a thing—but it was a famous book—a sort of dictionary of all ancient and much modern wisdom (and folly too), and so, seeing it in the catalogue, I must send for it,—and that in haste too, lest some other aspirant to wisdom, as old and with such feeble eyes and slender acquirements, should lay hands on it before me. But for John, voracious of knowledge, and with I hope at least fifty years before him, it may prove an useful repository to consult occasionally. When I had it, not a sheet had ever been cut open; it is perfectly clean, and I took the long trouble of giving every volume a firmer covering by pasting millboards to the sides within the blue papers. Its disappearance here will a little abate the vexation with which, as I said before, I sometimes look on these piles of books which I can never use.

There is nothing to tell you here. I hardly *ever* go into the town, and very seldom see any one that inhabits it. I think that, literally, I have spent but few hours there for several months past. There has grown upon me a kind of indisposition to see anybody, or to be seen, . . . I shall be out of date with the few friends I have—or had—in the place. I just stay with the girls, who are good and affectionate, but cannot compensate for the companion that I have lost—but would not recall, if such a thing were permitted in the divine economy. The pensive sense of that loss is, at some moments, almost changed into gladness by the thought of what she has gained—and what she has escaped; and by a hope that the dispensation will be salutary to myself, in regard to the most important interest. I think it has been so hitherto in some degree. It certainly has been made the cause of very many pious emotions, and wishes, and penitential regrets, and prayers, beyond my previous habitude of mind. I go often into the *past*, as you predicted; but often the present and the future almost predominate—the thought of her *as now*, and the anticipation

of seeing her again, varied through innumerable suggestions, imaginings, and inquiries. No doubt such musings have often employed your mind also. We must remain in this darkness, and this disseverment yet a while, perhaps but a little while. But oh! what joy to hope, that through sovereign mercy we shall regain, never more to lose, the society of our beloved departed companions, and with the ultimate addition, I hope, of all those younger ones that still remain with us. May the great Father of Spirits take benignant charge of us all, and grant us all to meet at length where those who are gone before us will feel ecstatic joy to receive us, all redeemed through the merit of the great Sacrifice. Both *you* three and *we* three have now some affecting relations, points of interest and attraction, with the invisible world, more than we had a few years since. I have suggested this consideration to the two children here. The deep interest of the subject has led me to think more, and to read a little more, concerning that mysterious *hades*. How strange that revelation itself has kept it so completely veiled. Many things in that economy probably could not be made intelligible to us in this our grossly material condition; but there are many questions which could be distinctly and intelligibly answered. How striking to consider that those who were so *lately* with us, asking those questions in vain, have now the perfect experimental knowledge. I can image the very look with which my departed Maria would sometimes talk or muse on this subject. The mystery, the frustration of our inquisitiveness, was equal to us both. What a stupendous difference *now*! And in her present grand advantage she knows with what augmented interest of solemn and affectionate inquisitiveness my thoughts will be still directed, and in vain, to the subject. But she knows why it is proper that I should for a while continue still in the dark,—should share no part of her new and marvellous revelation. . . .

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## CLXXII. TO MRS. ANDERSON.

[On the death of Mr. Anderson.]

Stapleton, 1833.

MY DEAR MADAM, . . . . I was glad to hear you had changed the scene so far as to pass some days at Overn. The recollection of recent mournful events very often came on me amidst the beautiful and sublime scenes that I have been passing through. It appeared to me so strange to think that I should not have to tell of anything I had seen to the estimable friend with whom I had so often and so lately communicated. That he was actually no longer on earth seemed again and again what I could hardly realize as a certain fact. It was a pensive thought that there was one important person the less for me to return to. And the loss came with double force, as being in addition to the irretrievable absence, the final disappearance, of one other person, to whom, during a former tour over the same interesting tracts, I expected to return with narratives and observations which now she hears no more.

For you there is a long train of pensive remembrances, reflections, and monitions; but, I trust, the benign influences of religion will both soften the painful sentiments, and render them salutary in respect to the highest interests. For myself, I have felt that some afflictive dispensation was *necessary* for the purpose of solemn admonition. How unapt we are to send forward our thoughts into the invisible future world, toward which we are continually approaching nearer! we have now a strong circumstance of attraction of our thoughts thitherward—a new relation formed with that world, by the removal thither, and the dwelling there, of those who were so lately our habitual and beloved companions here. . . . .

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## CLXXIII. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

Sept. 18, 1833.

. . . . The thought of my dear and ever faithful friend, as now standing at the very verge of life, has repeatedly car-

ried me back in memory to the period of our youth, when more than forty years since we were brought into habitual society, and the cordial esteem and attachment which have survived, undiminished, through so long a lapse of time and so much separation. *Then* we sometimes conjectured, but in vain, what might be the course appointed us to run, and how long, and which might first come to the termination. *Now* the far greater part of that unknown appointment has been unfolded and accomplished. To me a little stage further remains under the darkness; you, my dear friend, have a clear sight almost to the concluding point. And while I feel the deepest pensiveness in beholding where you stand, with but a step between you and death, I cannot but emphatically congratulate you. I have often felt great complacency in your behalf, in thinking of the course through which Providence has led you,—complacency in regard to the great purpose of life, its improvement, its usefulness, and its discipline and preparation for a better world. You are, I am sure, grateful to the sovereign Disposer in the review of it. You have had the happiness of faithfully and zealously performing a great and good service, and can rejoice to think that your work is accomplished, with a humble confidence that the Master will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," while you will gratefully exult in ascribing all to his own sovereign mercy in Jesus Christ.

But oh! my dear friend, whither is it that you are going? Where is it that you will be a few short weeks or days hence? I have affecting cause to think and to wonder concerning that unseen world; to desire, were it permitted to mortals, one glimpse of that mysterious economy, to ask innumerable questions to which there is no answer—what is the manner of existence,—of employment,—of society,—of remembrance,—of anticipation of all the surrounding revelations to our departed friends? How striking to think, that *she*, so long and so recently with me here, so beloved, but now so totally withdrawn and absent, that she experimentally knows all that I am in vain inquiring!

And a little while hence you, my friend, will be an object of the same solemn meditations and wandering inquiries. It is most striking to consider—to realize the idea—that *you*, to whom I am writing these lines, who continue yet

among mortals, who are on this side of the awful and mysterious veil,—that you will be in the midst of these grand realities, beholding the marvellous manifestation, amazed and transported at your new and happy condition of existence, while your friends are feeling the pensiveness of your absolute and final absence, and thinking how, but just now, as it were, you were with them.

But we must ourselves follow you to see what it is that the emancipated spirits who have obtained their triumph over death and all evil through the blood of the Lamb, find awaiting them in that nobler and happier realm of the great Master's empire; and I hope that your removal will be to your other friends and to me a strong additional excitement, under the influence of the divine Spirit, to apply ourselves with more earnest zeal to the grand business of our high calling.

It is a delightful thing to be assured, on the authority of revelation, of the perfect consciousness, the intensely awakened faculties, and all the capacities and causes of felicity of the faithful in that mysterious, separate state; and on the same evidence, together with every other rational probability, to be confident of the reunion of those who have loved one another and their Lord on earth. How gloomy beyond all expression were a contrary anticipation! My friend feels in this concluding day of his sojourn on earth the infinite value of that blessed faith which confides alone in the great Sacrifice for sin—the sole medium of pardon and reconciliation, and the ground of immortal hope; this has always been to you the very vitality of the Christian religion; and it is so—it is emphatically so—to me also.

I trust you will be mercifully supported,—the heart serene, and, if it may be, the bodily pain mitigated during the remaining hours, and the still sinking weakness of the mortal frame; and I would wish for you also, and in compassion to the feelings of your attendant relatives, that you may be favoured so far as to have a gentle dismissal; but as to this, you will humbly say, "Thy will be done."

I know that I shall partake of your kindest wishes and remembrance in your prayers,—the few more prayers you have yet to offer before you go. *When* I may follow you,

and, I earnestly hope, rejoin you in a far better world, must be left to a decision that cannot at the most be very remote; for yesterday completed my sixty-third year. I deplore before God my not having lived more devotedly to the grand purpose; and do fervently desire the aid of the good Spirit, to make whatever of my life may remain much more effectually true to that purpose than all the preceding.

But you, my friend, have accomplished your business—your Lord's business on earth. Go, then, willing and delighted, at his call.

Here I conclude, with an affecting and solemn consciousness that I am speaking to you for the last time in this world. Adieu! then, my ever dear and faithful friend. Adieu—for a while! may I meet you ere long where we shall never more say farewell!

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CLXXIV. TO THE REV. DR. CARPENTER.\*

*Stapleton, Oct. 14, 1833.*

DEAR SIR,—My memory is so very defective that I have no doubt your own, and that of each of the gentlemen of the party at Stapleton Grove, will have more faithfully retained many particulars of the conversation with that most interesting person, the Rajah Rammohunroy. I cannot recollect whether in replying, with promptitude and the utmost apparent frankness, to the respectful inquiries concerning his religious opinions, he expressed in so many exact words his "belief in the divine authority of Christ." But it was virtually such a declaration, when he avowed, as he did unequivocally, his belief in the resurrection of Christ, and in the Christian miracles generally. At the same time he said that the *internal* evidence of Christianity had been the most decisive of his conviction. And he gave his

\* This letter is taken from the Appendix to Dr. Carpenter's Discourse on the death of the rajah, where it is introduced in the following terms. "After I had decided to print the foregoing Discourse, I wrote the following note to the Rev. John Foster, whose religious sentiments I was well aware would, in the estimation of many, give a superior sanction to his testimony; and whose uprightness of mind, in connection with his well

opinion with some reasons for it, that the miracles are not the part of the Christian evidence the best adapted to the conviction of sceptics.

This led one of the gentlemen to observe, that surely the sceptics must admit, that if the miracles recorded were real facts, they must be irrefragable of the truth of what they were wrought to attest; and that in so serious an affair the sceptics are under a solemn obligation to examine faithfully the evidence that they were actually wrought, which if they did, they would find that evidence decisive.

The rajah instantly assented to this; but I thought I perceived by his manner that he had a slight surmise that the observation might possibly be meant to bear on *himself*, with some implication of a doubt, in consequence of what he had said of the inferior efficacy of the proof from miracles, whether *he* had an *entire* conviction of the reality of those recorded miracles: for he said very pointedly, that any argument on that subject was quite superfluous as to *him*, for that he did believe in their reality.

known acuteness of discernment and the profoundly reflective character of his understanding, would, I well knew, secure that testimony a ready reception in the judgment of all who know how to appreciate him and his writings.

TO THE REV. JOHN FOSTER, STAPLETON.

*Great George Street, Oct. 12, 1833.*

DEAR SIR,—You cannot have forgotten the remarkable conversation at Stapleton Grove on the 11th ult., principally between Dr. Jerrard and the rajah on the subject of the extent and reasons of the Christian belief of the latter. May I solicit your opinion as to the correctness of the following position—that the rajah's declarations at that time authorize the conviction that he believed in the divine authority of Christ, though he rested this belief on internal evidence, and that he believed in the resurrection of Christ?

May I further ask, if any thing that passed elsewhere in your hearing threw any doubt into your mind whether he believed in the divine authority of Christ?

If you deem the position correct, and answer the inquiry in the negative, may I, *to that extent*, speak of you as among others at the conversation to which I refer. I am, &c.

LANT CARPENTER,

To this I received the following reply, which must set the question at rest. For the fulness of its statement, and for the permission to employ it, I feel greatly obliged to Mr. Foster, as will also many other friends of the rajah."  
—*Dr. Carpenter's Discourse* (Appendix F.), pp. 82, 83.

It was of sceptics generally that he spoke; but I thought it probable (from recollection of something in one of his writings), that he had especially in his mind the *Hindoo* sceptics, whose imaginations have been so familiarized with the enormous prodigies of the Brahminical mythology, that, in spite of their rejecting them as monstrous fables, they retain an exaggeration of ideas, an incapacity of apprehending the true proportions of things, which will not allow them to see any thing great and impressive in the far less prodigious wonders of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures; besides this, their revolt from the belief of the fabulous miracles creates in them a tendency, unchecked by any due strength and discrimination of reason, to reject all others.

In the conversation with the rajah in a party who had the gratification of meeting him a few days later, there was not any distinct reference to his religious opinions. It turned on the moral and political state and prospects of India; and on an elucidation, at great length, of certain dogmas of the Indian philosophers.

If these few sentences can be of the smallest use to you, in any statement you may have to make or maintain respecting the rajah's professions on the subject of religion, they are quite at your service for that purpose.

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CLXXV. TO MISS SHEPPARD.

Jan. 17, 1834.

MADAM, . . . . While I must, and without the least affectation, attribute to the warmth of a youthful spirit, a certain friendly excess in your estimate of what I have endeavoured in the way of writing, I cannot but be gratified that it has been the means of imparting some pleasure and some improvement to such a mind. Nor can I be willing to entertain the ungracious anticipation (according to my own experience, in regard to some books and some kinds of writing), that at some future time, when the youthful feelings shall be somewhat cooled, when your judgment shall have become more rigorous, and your taste more fastidious, you will altogether revolt from the style of sentiment which



has had your approbation in the juvenile season. At least, as far as relates to religion, I trust you will always be substantially in agreement with the principles and intention of those pages, whatever *colour* of sentiment and cast of composition you may hereafter come to prefer.

Do you ever, now in your prime, look forward, through an extended course of years (which I hope is reserved for you on earth), to imagine what changes time may work in your feelings and tastes?

Perhaps it is well that an animated young person *cannot* do this successfully. But in the advance of life, and the progress of intellectual and moral discipline, you will come to feel that you are on a somewhat different tract of existence; that you are more apt to descry faults and make exceptions; that you are more slow to make a favourable judgment; that your approbation (I mean not of books merely, but of sentiments, language, characters, human beings, conduct, almost every thing) is more limited, more cautious, less complacent; that many pleasing things have lost much of the brightness and attraction they had in the morning of life. This, in a measure, at least, is the inevitable experience of advancing life. It is displeasing, it is grievous, that it should be so. But never mind, if the grand chief business of life go on well. If there be a maturation of judgment, a constant progress to a confirmed state of wisdom, excellence, and piety, we can afford to lose the vernal luxury of life, obtaining more, beyond comparison, than a compensation for the loss. And besides, religion has an invaluable power of *preserving* the animation of the soul, after the other sources of it become less copious, and some of them are dried up. An humble assurance of the divine favour, the consciousness of faithfully endeavouring to serve God, and the prospect into immortal life, for which that service is the preparation and introduction, will be a spring of vital, and sometimes vivid sentiment, when life has passed away from its youthful animation, or is declining into decay towards its conclusion,

Nevertheless I will congratulate my unknown friend on her youth, when the mind and the heart are in full activity, with all the fresh vigour of feeling; since I can assure myself she is resolved to secure the highest advan-

tage of her life, by the best exercise and improvement of her faculties, and their consecration to the noblest purpose of existence.

I hardly know how I have been led into this kind of observations, but let me assure you, they are not meant as one of the grave, cold lectures of age to youth. I wish you may, as long as possible, retain the delightful interest of that stage of life, and may have the least possible cause to regret it when it shall be past. Your kind and too flattering reference to the pleasure and advantage you have derived from my printed writings, claims from me all the cordial good wishes for your happiness in every respect,

With which I am, madam,

Very truly yours,

J. FOSTER.

CLXXVI. TO JOHN SHEPPARD, ESQ.

Jan. 23, 1834.

. . . . There seems to be, in the lingo of criticism, a certain factitious law or standard of poetry, by authority of which the critic (or would-be critic) shall take upon him to pronounce—"This is"—or "this is *not*, poetry"—often, most likely, not knowing exactly what it means. I wonder whether Lord Byron did, when he pronounced, as I have seen him quoted somewhere, that Cowper's writings were not poetry.

But whatever poetry may really be (and whether it be yet settled among them *what* it is, is more than I know), I can see no manner of reason why just and interesting thoughts on any subject, but especially a serious and elevated one, should not be given out in verse, if the writer be adequately master of that mode of constructing language. And if the structure be smooth and easy to read, and the diction be perspicuous, natural, and uncontrived, the majority of readers would prefer to have an imaginative subject in a poetic form. Simplicity, naturalness of diction, is a grand merit, utterly forfeited by many of our aspirants, both in verse and prose, while aiming at

*effect*, as they call it, by artificial trickery, or by a stately, stilted march of language. An artificial style of composition can please only when it has the exquisite grace, and finish, and clear-pointed thought of Pope, or the power and dignity of Milton. One does not forget Johnson's observation, that *Cato's Soliloquy* is an instance to prove, that the most solemn and elevated thought may be, in the most impressive manner, conveyed in language of the utmost simplicity.

. . . . It does always appear to me very unaccountable (among, indeed, so many other inexplicable things), that the state of the soul, after death, should be so completely veiled from our serious inquisitiveness. That in some sense it is proper that it should be so, needs not be said. But is not the sense in which it is so, the *same* sense in which it is proper there should be *punitive* circumstances, privations, and inflictions, in this our sinful state? For one knows not how to believe, that *some* revelation of that next stage of our existence would not be more influential to a right procedure in this first, than such an *absolute unknown*. It is true, that a profound darkness, which we know we are destined ere long to enter, and soon to find ourselves in an amazing light, is a striking object of contemplation. But the mind still, again and again, falls back from it, disappointed and uninstructed, for want of some defined forms of reality, to seize, retain, and permanently occupy it. In default of revelation, we have to frame our conjectures on some principle of analogy which is itself *arbitrary*, and without any means of bringing it to the test of reason.

. . . . It is a subject profoundly interesting to myself; my own advance into the evening of life is enough to make it so; and then the recent events! You have your own special remembrances, though, as to several of the objects, going to a considerable time back. I have one most interesting *recent* object: and there are—were—*Hall, Anderson, Hughes*; where, and what are they now? at this very instant how existing, how employed? . . . . I have but just room for kind remembrances to the yet living. . . . The rapid passing away of life! In looking back last week, into one of my early letters, to her who has

left me, I found that it is exactly *thirty years* since I became acquainted with you and them.

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CLXXVII. TO THE REV. DR. LEITCHILD.

March 15, 1834.

. . . . I passed some time with him [Mr. Hughes] in the Academy, ending 1791, 1792. We both had all the spirit of youth, and were very confidentially intimate. But I then went away to various distances, and did not see him for some years, nor exchange with him but the fewest letters. I hardly know how this happened, but I was led into widely different associations, though hardly into any equally intimate friendship. I subsequently passed some months at Battersea, chiefly in his house; but since that period have rarely seen him, and that only in short snatches of time, which occurred in his Bible Society journeys. Nor was our correspondence more frequent than those brief interviews. All this time, nevertheless, we maintained (I can answer for myself, and I think for him also) a fixed sincere regard for each other, not altered by time or absence. It may be necessary to add, that though invincibly amiable to each other, we differed on various points, and good humouredly rated each other upon them when we met. This did not at all unsettle the firmly established mutual esteem, whatever it might do with the *complacency* of an occasional short season of intercourse. But I shall convey a wrong impression, if anything I have suggested should seem to say that the friendship between us was *slight*. It was firm, cordial, unalterable, in spite of personal non-intercourse and slight shades of difference.

He had great mental activity, quickness of apprehension, and discriminate perception. He had considerable ambition of intellectual superiority, but less I think for any purpose of ostentation than for the pleasure of mental liberty and power. He was apt, like other young men, to be somewhat dazzled by the magniloquent style in writing; but at the same time always justly appreciated

plain, strong, good sense, whether in books, sermons, or conversation. A defect of simplicity and obvious *directness* in his own writing and preaching, was I think not a little owing to his admiration at the time in question (and I suppose an earlier one) of certain writers of the eloquent class whose style was somewhat stilted—too artificial and rhetorical. His preaching, as a young man, was often very animated, rather unmethodical and diffuse, and extremely rapid; in this last respect in perfect contrast to his pulpit exercises towards the close of life. His temperament was what is called mercurial; lively, hasty, earnest, versatile, and variable. He was kind and candid, yielding the sympathies of friendship, warm in its feelings, and prompt in its appropriate offices; free from acrimonious and resentful feelings, and from those minor perversities of temper or whim, which, without being regarded as great faults, are very annoying in social life. There is nothing I retain a stronger impression of, than the proofs he habitually manifested of a sincere and firmly established piety, which so attempered his youthful vivacity as to restrain it in its gayest indulgences and sallies from degenerating into an irreligious, or in any other way offensive levity. I can remember that in hours when we gave the greatest social indulgence to our youthful spirits, he would fall on serious observations and reflections, in the unforced and easy manner which indicated the prevalence of serious interest in his mind. The hold which the great and vital principles of religion had upon him was not slackened by his indecision, his incompleteness of theological system, respecting secondary points of doctrine. His public discourses were too little in obvious and studied conformity to any established model to be acceptable to a considerable portion of his hearers. In addition, his voice would sometimes, independently of his will and almost of his consciousness, take and retain through the whole service a pitch above its natural tone, necessarily causing an unpleasant monotony, which had a disadvantageous effect, as it always must, for attraction and impression. But I think that he was oftener in possession of his natural voice. . . . .

## CLXXVIII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, the longest day 1834.*

. . . . The thing most on my mind just at this instant is—chagrin, vexation, mortification, self-accusation, for a chief folly of my life—*having bought so many books*; which are looking insultingly at me from their crowded shelves all round the room; and I seem to hear a note of scorn from within sundry boxes, in which are immured a score or two of the splendid and costly ones—in which score or two is sunk a sum which would have furnished a very decent whole library for a dissenting, or even a Methodist preacher.

I am the more irritably sensitive to this mockery of theirs from the condition of my *eyes*, which, during all the summer part of the year (and *this* year especially) cannot endure the business of reading, without a very painful force put on them.

When to this disablement of the reading organ, I add the consideration that, however good that organ were, a whole century of years from this time would not suffice to read once through all these volumes—and then the other circumstance, that I *forget* every thing I read or have read—and then cap this accumulation of considerations with one more, or rather the double, consideration of what has been expended, not only of *income*, but of hundreds of pounds of *principal* sunk—and the difference between what they cost and what the very same books might be had for *now*—when I put all these items of mortification together, the result is a very hot caustic on my *conscience* as well as on other parts of the mental sensorium.

. . . . To be sure, some of those things may have been of some little value, for pleasure or perhaps a certain kind of instruction, in the mean time, but nothing like enough to compensate the difference. A *rich* man would not need to care, but when I consider how straitened, during a whole quarter of a century, *my* limited means have been, by the indulgence in the *fine* sort of literature, I cannot help feeling mortification and self-reproach. Especially I feel so at the thought how much better it would have been for a considerable part of this expenditure, if I could really spare it, to have gone to the service of charitable and religious

objects. Not that I have not managed to do my share in *that* way also; perhaps beyond some of my better endowed neighbours; but I should most willingly have done more in that way but for the unfortunate drain aforesaid. And so too would my late beloved associate, one of the most liberal-minded of human beings. It is indeed, one of my regrets in the remembrance of her, that this imprudent expenditure imposed too hard an economy on *her* benevolence. . . . But for a very unexpensive manner of life (the preclusion of luxury, travelling, &c.) the expenditure in question would have been impossible. I am reminded of—“*Whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?*” The book-and-print fineries will most likely, as in all other cases, go to the auction room one day or other, and will bring for—who can tell whom? perhaps a fourth part of what they cost. As to the crowd of the common order of books, I should willingly make presents of some hundreds of volumes; but I find that, excepting such as I am still unwilling to dislodge from the shelves, they are for the most part, not of a kind to be of any use to the persons I would give them to. Sundry useful and some valuable ones I have, for several years past, given to some of the most meritorious of the students in the Academy; and a number (such as the late Anderson judged to be necessary and useful) have gone to its library.

. . . . Do you stand quite aloof from the grand *dissenting commotion*? They—(I say not *we*, for I should not have been a concurring particle in the dust the dissenters have raised,—I mean as to the *extent* of their demands) have mistaken their policy in calling out (*at present*) for the “*separation*,” a thing most palpably impracticable, till a few more Olympiads have passed over us. . . .

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CLXXIX. TO THE REV. THOMAS COLES.

*Stapleton, December 22, 1834.*

. . . . From time to time we have heard, with sincere sympathy, of the increasing debility and sufferings of her who now suffers no more. It was painful but to think of

what was endured by the victim of the long progress and continual aggravation of such a disease, which the affectionate and deeply interested attendants feel themselves unable to arrest or materially to alleviate. In such a case, it is distressing for them to feel that the doomed object must suffer, must inevitably *bear it all*, whatever be their affectionate care, whatever be their willingness, if that were possible, to lighten the pressure by bearing themselves a share of it. How distinct and separate, how *solitary* in this sense is the individual, who might say, "I am very grateful for all your sympathy and assiduous kind offices, but still it is I alone that am to feel my strength diminishing, to struggle with suffocation, and to go through the aggravating malady to the last conflict." Nevertheless it is a consolation to the survivors, when an amiable sufferer, like your daughter, has had all the alleviations which can be given by vigilant affection, combined with domestic accommodation and medical aid, so different from the melancholy condition of many, who languish into death in poverty and every kind of destitution.

It would also have been consolatory, no doubt, to have received some more distinct expression of a cheering view into the future scene, in the near approach to the entrance into it. But, I trust, that no gloomy sentiment will, on this account, rest on your mind. The divine mercy may well be confided in, much beyond the extent of the specific decided indications displayed by those who are the objects of it. I would not doubt, that in the silent thoughts and emotions of your child that mercy was desired, and that it has been found. The reluctance to leave this life is in a young person, to whom it has been pleasing in possession and flattering in prospect, very compatible with a state of mind which is safe for leaving it. A high satisfaction, or animated pleasure, in the prospect of death, is probably granted but to very greatly the minority of such young persons, who yet leave us no ground for distrust that to them it is a happy change.

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CLXXX. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

Stapleton, Feb. 16, 1835.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—I need not say again that I am always interested by what you tell me of yourself and domestic associates, and of the neighbourhood; partly because as to the *latter* I *am* a stranger, and as to the former (yourself and Mrs. F.) I do *not* feel myself a stranger. You two have remained in my memory and regard *as the same*, while, as to the neighbourhood, the inhabitants that I knew are almost all swept away; and I am told that almost the very face of the country is changed. Some descriptions to this effect were given me by Mr. Jackson, whom I saw at Bath a few days since. He told me how Hebden-Bridge is grown into a town; how certain gloomy and romantic *glens*, the scenes of my solitary wanderings some forty or more years since, are cleared of their forest-shades, opened into thoroughfares, and occupied with cotton-mills—and he added—meeting-houses. How strangely would the sight of this break up my ancient associations! and with a feeling of the uncomplacent kind; though, as to one of the intrusive novelties—meeting-houses—I certainly ought to regard them as a good exchange for the ancient resorts of owls and foxes. By the help of Mr. J. I endeavoured at a combination of the modern with the ancient geography. But indeed in simply recovering the ancient there were difficulties, such as D'Anville had probably to encounter in his verifications of places in the ancient world. In some instances I remembered places of which I had lost the names. In others there were names remaining in my memory disconnected from the places. . . . I am never so unpatriotic as to *depreciate* my native locality. I have always and everywhere constantly asserted that I have seen *very* few places more remarkable in the quality denominated *picturesque* than that district. Its bold and varied features will remain in my imagination as long as I live. And they have not been the less cherished there for that wild and *moor-land* gloom, which, on some sides, invades and bounds them. This circumstance has always been congenial with my habits of feeling. A gloomy and solitary tendency belonged, I suppose, to my nativity.

If I were with you, it would be very interesting to go into a long and patient comparison of our parallel series of feelings, impressions, notions, habits: though I confess it would be a very imperfect and faded recollection that I could make of my own. You and our friend Mr. Greaves, are the only coevals from youth, with whom this social and comparative retrospect could have a strong and sympathetic interest. *Hughes* was the one other individual. And with him the social comparison would, in a great degree, have been under the same predicament in one respect—that the intimate personal association was much the greatest in the *early* part of life. For more than *thirty* years past I have but very rarely and briefly seen him—slight snatches of time, when his Bible Society traverses brought him in my way, at intervals of one, two, or even three years; and communications by letter were hardly more frequent.

I am gratified by what you allow me to believe of your own and my old friend Mrs. Fawcett's health. Do you both fairly and fully take to it that you are *old* people? I can now and then, in particular circumstances, detect myself in a certain sort of reluctance to recognize that fact as to myself. I dare not assert that the most musical notes that I could hear would be—"Old Foster,"—a designation which, though I may not happen to hear it, I dare say slides into the colloquial speech of those who have to make a reference to me, notwithstanding there being no younger male branch of my family to make such epithet necessary for distinction. But any feeling I ever have of this kind brings with it, sensibly and invariably, a sentiment of self-reproach, in the admonition that a conscious, full, decided, satisfactory preparation for another life and a higher state of existence, would associate a pleasing sentiment with every thing that would remind me how near, comparatively at all events, I am approaching to the momentous and mysterious transition. And I do earnestly implore the heavenly grace which alone can *render* that preparation decided and satisfactory. The retrospect of my long life is deeply humiliating, whether judged of absolutely, or by comparison with individuals who have gone from indefatigable Christian service to their glorious reward. In this view it is not without a profoundly mortifying emotion that

I can repeat the name of Dr. CAREY, unquestionably the very foremost name, of our times, *in the whole Christian world*. What an entrance *his* has been into that other world! . . . .

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CLXXXI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

May 21, 1835.

I have to confess I am far too much your fellow sinner in the matter of being too much occupied with politics; and I feel somewhat of the bad effect which you complain of. At the same time, as the affairs of the nation and the world at this period *are* prodigiously important to the interests (and not *exclusively* the temporal ones) of a very large portion of mankind, one makes out for one's self a *partial* justification. The point is, how and where to adjust the limitation that ought to be imposed by higher interests, while one looks at the momentous crisis for good or evil at which the course of time, and we may say of Providence, has now arrived. But these newspapers—these newspapers; to think how nearly they constitute my whole reading! I am mortified at it, and want to see, and *resolve*, how to mend. At any rate, I am not sorry for the non-appearance here of that "*Watchman*." There was evidently a very competent ability; but I was disgusted with the spirit—the servility, the time-serving, the *practical* disavowal, if not expressly in words, of the principles but for the assertion of which, by *nobler spirits*, Methodism itself would never have enjoyed such immunity and privilege. The last number you sent having dilated with high complacency on the complete establishment in power of Sir R. Peel, and the gradual subsidence into impotence and insignificance of the factious opposition to him, I *was* a little curious to see what would be said *just about ten or twelve days after*, of the *fall* of the idol, on whose "honoured brow" (that was the phrase) the national approbation and the crown of enduring power had descended and planted themselves. But, of course, it would be described as one of the "awful and inscrutable dispensations of Providence," inscrutable except as vindictive, it being

methodistically certain that in no other way than as a national judgment for our sins, Providence would permit the recovered ascendancy of a party who are intent on abating the pestilent nuisance of the Irish Church.

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CLXXXII. TO H. HORSFALL, ESQ.

Stapleton, June 27, 1835.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND, . . . . What should this letter say? What should it be an answer to? What should be taken for granted in it? I may well ask myself such questions, since I have under my hand a letter from you, dated—*exactly eleven years back.*

. . . . But to think of the long tract of years since our last personal communication! That was at a time when we might, with tolerable propriety, be called *young* men; whereas now, I dare say I am denominated among my acquaintance, “old Foster;” and I was particularly struck with Mr. Hamilton’s expression—“old Mr. Horsfall.” “*Old!*” I thought, that sounds very strange; my image of him is that of a *young man*. But I soon recollected myself, and thought, what should he be else, (and, at the same time, what should *I* be else?) since between thirty and forty years have intervened between the present time and the time on which my memory is resting? There was the additional consideration, that in your case there is a *younger* man of the same name. I have no son to require or suggest that note of distinction. He that might have been the cause of such a distinction has been nine years in the grave.

What changes in the world, in our native place, in ourselves, since the time we were familiarly associated! I wonder in what manner and degree *you* are changed, in every respect, of personal appearance, of habits, character, opinions, dispositions. As to the visible exterior, we doubtless might pass each other without the slightest recognition, the least hint of feeling that we had ever seen each other before. You would be never the wiser on the matter for a *portrait* which I see you mention in your

letter to have seen, if it were the one which I just recollect to have seen in some magazine which I chanced to open in some house where I had occasion to call. There could have been no authority for putting it there; and it appeared to me a paltry imitation, with very little likeness, of a larger engraving made from a drawing for which I very reluctantly, at the request of some friends hereabouts, consented to sit to a painter here; which drawing was very true to the subject about a dozen (or perhaps more) years since. . . .

But as to character, feelings, opinions,—perhaps I may not be far wrong in presuming that an uniform tenor of life, in an unchanged locality of residence, has prevented any other great change than what is inevitable from the effect of passing through so long a course of time and experience. As to myself, I can hardly tell whether I am much like what the young man was, or not. In truth, I have a strangely imperfect recollection of what I was in early life; nor could I, whatever effort I might deliberately make, draw out any clear account of what progressive time, though through a life of few incidents, and little change of external circumstances, has wrought upon me. Indeed, I should have difficulty enough to describe what I am *now*. The thing I have the strongest impression of is, that I am far different from what I wish I were; that my improvement through so long a life has been miserably deficient; that, in the review, I have a profound conviction of the need of pardoning mercy over it all; and that I earnestly hope the remainder of life, of whatever duration, may be much more faithfully devoted to the great purpose of preparing for another—that mysterious, unveiled, and awful hereafter, on which both of us shall make the grand experiment, at no very distant time at the furthest.

. . . . . You, I believe, rather frequently preach, and I hope you will long be able to do so; though in your letter, so long since, you call yourself an “old man,” too old to journey hither; and I think I am too old to journey your distance northward. And what should I find if I *did*, in all the circuit with which I was acquainted? Perhaps *five or six*, at most, surviving of my ancient coevals! Happy, those of them who are gone whither may the God of all grace

prepare us to follow them! . . . . I know not whether I should superscribe you *Reverend*. I thank no one for so designating *me*.

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CLXXXIII. TO JOHN EASTHOPE, ESQ.

August 26, 1835.

. . . . The plot thickens rarely in its progress;—but for the *what, how, and when*, of the denouement?

Though chagrined in the immediate view of the matter, there is another larger view in which I am extremely gratified. This great lumpish nation, so long and willingly gulled with a stupid superstition for what it calls its “venerable institutions” of constitution . . . admirably adjusted balance in the legislature, and all that, has needed and still needs, all that is now and latterly exhibiting, in order to bring it to its senses. But now that it is fumbling up those senses at last, how is it to make a practical use of them? Tell me that. It is like a man who having, during a long fit of drunkenness, been bamboozled into surrenders, pledges, signatures, and so forth, and recovering his sense at length, stares round in dismay at what he has done, and is utterly at a loss for a remedy.\* In your paper just now brought me, you say, “But they” [the Lords] “will see, to their mortification, with *what ease a great nation will do itself justice*.” Now, my good friend, they will see no such thing. This is one of those idle bravados which you journalists think it good policy to sport, for the purpose of keeping up the spirits of the party. When you are asked *how? how? how?* you are discreetly silent. As to the effect of the popular manifestation of opinion, by meetings, resolutions, speeches, petitions, and so forth, why it is in the full view and easy defiance of all this that their Lordships are going on without the least demur or wavering, to do

\* “The English nation are like a man in a lethargy; they are never roused from conservatism till mustard poultices are put to their feet. Had it not been for the fires of Smithfield, they would have remained hostile to the Reformation. Had it not been for the butcheries of Jeffries they would have opposed the Revolution.”—DR. ARNOLD (in 1836). See his *Life and Correspondence*, Vol. II. p. 63.

just all that the people are protesting and clamouring against. This that the people are doing is of no avail—what else, what more are they to do?

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## CLXXXIV. TO JOHN EASTHOPE, ESQ.

November 20, 1835.

. . . . The *Morning Chronicle* has shown a signal and progressive improvement in execution, in clearness, force, point, happy illustration, range of allusion, and—*quantity*.

. . . . There is one thing I should have been disposed to make a remark on now and then, if I had been sitting quietly with you as at Cheltenham, or walking as at Malvern,—I mean the mode, sometimes, of referring to the Catholic (*i. e.* Popish) religion;—a slight tinge of that which makes the antithesis to the Rodens, O'Sullivan's, and Co.,—something like an implication, or negative admission, at the least, that Popery is not so bad a thing, that it is a religion of charity as well as any Protestant mode of religion—something that seems to assert or assume that those furious and mischievous declaimers *are in the wrong in toto*,—in their reprobation of popery itself, as well as their violence of temper and language, and perhaps the base principle and motive of some of them. Now surely we are not coming round to a virtual disavowal of the Reformation, by a discovery at last that Popery is *not* a most execrable and pernicious imposture, a deadly corruption of Christianity, and a system essentially intolerant, tyrannical, and malignant. No doubt it has, as a *practical* system, come under some degree of *compelled* modification in countries where liberty and knowledge have acquired the ascendant. But let it not take the credit of that. It is in itself (as indeed itself avows) unchangeable. Let these *compelling influences* (which it has always done all it could to resist) have the credit, and not Popery itself, of whatever mitigation has *practically* taken place. The modern Catholics, *in this country*, such as the late Butler and Eustace, the present Murray, O'Connell, &c., are protesting against the imputa-

tion to them and their church of the persecuting spirit and the noxious principles. They, and their religion too, are all charity, candour, and benevolence—if you will believe them. But I *cannot* believe them. How should I, while they at the same time avow and swear a firm fidelity to a church which by the unalterable laws of its institute makes intolerance—the extirpation of heretics—a *duty*? When they come talking or canting in this strain, I would say to them, Your Church, your sovereign authority, to which, on peril of your souls, you must maintain an inviolable fidelity,—has it ever revoked its sanguinary decrees and injunctions?—but indeed the very idea is foolish, since an infallible and unalterable authority *cannot* revoke its decrees. I would say, Do you disown the grand and final standard of your church, the Council of Trent? Answer, like honest, plain-spoken men, *Yes*, or *No*; and don't be playing fast and loose with us. If you say *No*, it is then in vain for you to pretend to charity, liberality, and all that; in vain that you charge us with bigotry and injustice in imputing to you the odious principles which are essentially inherent in your institution. If you say *Yes*, and yet profess to adhere firmly to your Church, what becomes of your fidelity, your consistency, your honesty? If you can thus, just as it serves your purpose, be off and on with your adored Church—your very religion itself—how can we depend on your integrity in any thing else? What, at this rate, really *are* your principles? and what *is* your unalterable, infallible Church? Do not palter and mystify; but either explicitly declare that you abjure the intolerant and murderous maxims which that Church binds you to maintain, and thus bravely incur its anathema, or, distinctly avow that you maintain those maxims,—and then we shall know on what ground to meet you, and on what terms to give you that toleration which you virtually tell us you could not *in conscience grant to us*, if, as in Italy or Spain, you were powerful enough to withhold it. Tell us you approve that exercise of the Church authority under which, in Italy, &c., a man (not having the rights and exemptions of a foreigner) could not publicly avow himself a Protestant but at the cost of his property, liberty, and probably his life. This would be honestly telling us that if only you had the *power*, you



would do the same here and every where.—It is only on this sanguinary and exterminating, but *essential*, principle of the Romish church that I am commenting. As to the many fooleries and corruptions of what may be called *simply religious* doctrine and institution, let them pass, as not *directly interfering with the civil peace of society*. Between these, however, and the *bloody maxims* of the Popish church, the O'Sullivans, Boytons, &c., are furnished with weapons which, vilely as they use them, there is no fairly getting out of their hands. And little less to be condemned than their fanaticism on the one hand, is, on the other, that sort of cant of liberalism, now in vogue in some of our journals and speech-makings, which deprecates all zeal against Popery, assuming, by implication at least, that one mode of religion is just as good as another, that is, that none of them has any real basis in truth and Divine authority. . . .

There has been expressed a great deal of contempt for the handle made by the fanatics of *Den's Theology*; and some of the Irish Catholic prelacy have affected to consider that as but a sort of obsolete thing, and to wonder it should have been brought from some musty recess against them. Now it did, I recollect, appear to me, that the Bishop of Exeter, in one of his speeches, decisively saddled those ecclesiastics with that book, as a work authorized by them both formerly and at the present time.—Those Irish Catholics have been most infamously treated, all along, by the Government and the Protestant Ascendancy; but at the same time their leading ecclesiastics are evasive, equivocating, disingenuous men—not to use a harsher epithet. . . .

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CLXXXV. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

*Stapleton, March 24, 1836.*

. . . . I feel a very significant intimation of old age in extreme reluctance to any journeying and visiting movement, even when it is to see persons and things that I cannot but be gratified to see. . . . One thing is, that I have grown into a great reluctance to meet strangers—strangers of any order whatever. I acknowledged this to E., who kindly

said, "Then we will *have* no strangers beyond one or two, whom I am sure you will be pleased to see." As to *seeing*, beyond seeing him and family, and seeing you, the object is, to see London. I was amused by his telling me, in one of his letters, that I should be as quiet and retired as I pleased, have country air, &c., while my object was not to be retired at all, and to take in as little as I could help, of country air. What I should be after, would be in the thick of the town every day—in perfect contrast to the seclusion and rural scene and air at Stapleton. . . . The British Museum will be a very chief object with me; especially the apartment entirely occupied by *engravings*. My taste has been in that way, to an unfortunate excess, and there may there be inspected innumerable fine and rare things hardly to be seen, (at least, by me) any where else. It is too likely I shall want several days, chiefly in that enormous assemblage of art and nature. Amidst such spectacles, however, it is a great grievance, and partly a shame, to me, to be so destitute as I am, of *scientific* knowledge. I can only gaze and admire in a mere outside way,—just so far as the things are a show to the sight. It is now too late in life for me to aim at any other than the most superficial knowledge.

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CLXXXVI. TO JOHN EASTHOPE, ESQ.

*Stapleton, April 8, 1836.*

. . . . The special and duplicate paper . . . . instantly explained its purpose, on my opening it. I had failed to notice particularly the "Poets' Corner," as I remember the old newspapers, in Yorkshire, used to have it.—The successive pieces have been unequal, but, for the greater part, sparkling and mischievous enough. Capitally fantastic, witty, and brilliant, that about *Jupiter's breakfast*. There is the very viper's tooth in the two pieces about the *Ohimpanzee*. How one should like to have *seen* its effect on that coxcomb —. Do you ever happen to hear how these detonating balls are actually taken by those they are thrown at? The thorough veterans, one has always heard, main-

tain their philosophy perfectly well under such assailments; but to the greener sort one would fancy they may be rather annoying.

The *graver* people (of whom I am one) have their objection, and may have it without being at all ultra-puritanical, to that tinge of *profaneness* which the satirist infuses into some of his pieces. Perhaps Jupiter and Hebe might very well be allowed to consign themselves to the Devil, but they had better not have done it in the hearing of the many decorous and even religious people who may be supposed to read the *Morning Chronicle*. It is really not well-judged, even on the score of good taste, and what I may call literary dignity, to make no higher reference, in the most witty, as well as most ingenious and elegant poet now alive, to indulge himself in diction and allusions accommodated to the appetite of men who trifle with the most serious subjects—an appetite which he probably does in his own mind hold in condemnation and contempt. The wit and the penal justice of satire should eschew such an unworthy association.

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CLXXXVII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, Aug. 19, 1836.*

. . . . With about, perhaps, one-tenth part of your experience in the business of local removals, I can yet well understand what an annoyance it is. Have you any particular feeling about becoming attached to a spot, simply *as* a place of residence? I have always felt an indisposition to contract such an attachment,—independently of not having had any strong local cause for it,—and from a kind of feeling of incongruity between such adhesions and our grand destiny to leave, ere long, all earthly localities—to abandon the globe itself. I have mused sometimes in wonder, when I have seen persons, perhaps far forward beyond the youthful age, building houses, laying out grounds, contriving, and assiduous in making, what are called “improvements;” delighted with the spot, pulling their friends about through walk after

walk, and from point to point, to show them how beautiful, how commodious, how improved from its original condition; how, perhaps, picturesque; "*Isn't it a pleasant spot to set one's self down in?*" One's silent reflection was—"Yes; and for how long?" Some of them will say, it is in consideration of their families, of "my son;"—but the truth is, almost always, that it is chiefly their own passion for the thing, in forgetfulness of the funeral that will, one no immensely distant day, be seen passing from this pleasant abode to one narrow, cold, and dark enough. I have always thought, that were I a man of fortune, and located in what is called a "seat," I should take no kind of interest about its adjustments and "improvements," beyond some matter of mere immediate convenience.

. . . . I felt no *very* strong excitement (too old and too cold) among the wonders and grandeurs of the great Babylon, but on returning into the stillness of this obscure den, I felt for a week or more, as if I could do nothing but sleep. . . . In looking from the top of the Colosseum, over the city, the first on our planet beyond all doubt or comparison, one could not help the invading thought, What an awful, what a direful, spectacle it was, in one view,—the stupendous amount of *sin* in it. Oh, when will the predicted better age arrive? \*

\* The following quotations from Mr. Foster's *Letters on the Metropolis* (Vol. I. p. 291, 2nd edit.), describe some of his *first* impressions of "the great Babylon."

"London is really a very wonderful place. I do not so much refer to its prominent inanimate features, its great buildings, its repositories of art and curiosities, its shipping, and its magnificent mass of habitations. Accumulations of brick, stone, and wood, are of very subordinate account, except indeed as some of them are monuments of the industry, ingenuity, or superstition of past ages, and others the condensation of the condition of the present inhabitants. What strikes me infinitely more, is the astonishing assemblage of human beings. One human individual is to a thoughtful mind a most wonderful object; but in the midst of London you are conscious of being surrounded with eight or nine hundred thousand such individuals, collected together so thick and close as to give at some moments the idea of one undivided, enormous living mass, of which the numerous streets are as the arteries and veins through which the stream of vitality is for ever flowing. You may walk on, and wonder where the moving mass will end. But there is *no* end; an unnumbered succession of faces still meets you, while you recollect at every step, if thinking of what

Thanks for the Watchman ;—but you will not send the *other* number ; nobody in this world is willing to let one know the whole truth of things. . . .

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CLXXXVIII. TO JOHN PURSER, ESQ.

*Stapleton, August 26, 1836.*

. . . . I am very much gratified by the information, that you have resumed your proper position, as adherent and assistant to the Baptist interest in Dublin. No man can you see, ‘These are not the same that I saw the last moment ;’ and again, ‘These are not the same that were passing me when I made that remark ; what is become of all that are gone by ?’ You are apprised at the same time that there is a much greater number in the houses that you pass. Some parts are so crammed that one might suppose there was not a single square league of ground unoccupied on this side the Arctic or Antarctic Circle ; or that if there be, some powers of pestilence and death possess it, and prohibit the intrusion of man to seek there space, air, and freedom. Image to yourself at the same time, if you can, all the other numerous streets with their moving crowds, and the numbers in the houses on each hand ; and finally recollect that each of all this multitude has his thoughts, his temper, his interests, and his cares, measuring still the importance of interests and cares to each person by the importance which you feel in your own, and you will soon find that the contemplation and the scene contained within a few square miles, grows, like that of infinity, into a magnitude beyond the compass of the mind.

“The extreme activity that prevails on every side would seem partly allied to cheerfulness ; but I own that the reflections by which I am subject to be haunted amidst this vast display of eager and gay activity, are not of a very cheerful cast. I should have a mean opinion of the moral sensibility of the man that should not be mournfully impressed by a view of the depravity that is obvious and apparent, and which is but the slight external sign and indication of the enormous measure of unseen evil. This great city in desolation and ruins would be deemed a most melancholy spectacle ; but is it not much more melancholy to see on so vast a scale the dignity of man in ruins ? Do you not feel it an awful consideration as you traverse the city, that there constantly rests on a few square miles around you, a measure of vice sufficient to poison an universe of corruptible beings ? Do you not feel something like what might have been felt by a man standing amidst the streams of Egypt, when Moses had turned the waters into blood ? If depravity as an abstraction could be clothed in a form which would render it perceptible by the eyes, the collective depravity of this magnificent city would be the most terrific and ominous apparition that man ever beheld. The fires and smoke that ascended from Sodom on its final morning, were not so dreadful an appearance as would have been such a vision of its wickedness, and as would be such a vision of the vice of a

have a higher respect than I (as far as my knowledge goes) for the Moravians. But I confess I was sorry for your (apparent) secession from what I will call "the good old cause," in the long protracted day of its adversity.

A good while since I heard of the relinquishment of Swift's Alley. 'I am now gratified by Mr. Bliss's information, that a substitute is rising, or on the point of rising, in so vastly a different locality as Stephen's Green. If the change in the condition of what we name the *interest*, shall at all correspond to such a change of *place*, a happy season will come at last. . . . What a long history of depression! dating from, and including, my own temporary occupation there. I am too conscious of my own great deficiency in my duty there, to have anything to say of my many successors; in all reason and candour, I ought, and am most ready, to believe that none of them has been equally deficient.

This self-accusatory recollection put aside, how many images belonging to those times arise in my memory! Your estimable parents it were superfluous even to name, or your sister. . . . There was Meath Street dwelling,

modern great city. I do not think this is the language of excess. Even the man who would take only the laws of the land for his rule of judging, if he believe or nearly believe the statements and conjectures of the author of 'The Police of the Metropolis,' will stand aghast at the view. How much more melancholy, then, must it appear to a Christian moralist who applies, even in the most candid spirit, the laws which determine the opinion of the Judge of the world!

" . . . I rejoice to believe that there is in London, a large measure of sincere Christianity, but the whole mass of misery which might be relieved and is not, shows you *what a measure there is not*; that is to say, if our Lord's prophetic description of the last judgment do really exhibit the great test of Christian character. But if the whole amount of that suffering which the affluent might remove without reducing their enjoyments below a sober *Christian* estimate, be so much *crime*, is not the charge of very awful magnitude, however it may be divided, or wherever it may mainly fall? It appears to me of urgent and solemn importance to each of the rich people who make a particular profession of the religion of Christ, to be able to stand forth and say, 'I am not guilty of this charge; on others be this sin, which will meet the strongest condemnation of the last day; all that an individual can do, I do.' And can they pronounce this deliberately and firmly amidst that style of luxury and conformity to the world, in which you have had occasion to see that some of them indulge?"—*Mr. Foster to Miss M. Snooke, March 14, and April 2, 1803.*

Montpelier, the scenes of the vicinity, the park, the barracks, the school-room on (was it not?) *Arran Quay*; the numberless talks among us, on numberless subjects, yourself a prompt and very shrewd interlocutor. There were the "Sons of Brutus," watched, they were told after they had ceased to meet, by Major Sirr, and among them the intelligent Green, master of some parish school. (On second thought, I am not sure he *was* of them, or, I should say, *us*.)

. . . . Perhaps it is probable that I, having an insulated remembrance—a retrospect enclosed and secluded, as it were, within a section of time severed from the before and after—may have a more marked and distinct ideal vision than you; since, living on permanently, on the same ground, you would partly lose the things of that time in their sequel, seeing many of them gradually and insensibly changing and passing away, by a process that had no one great chasm, to separate off the former stage as one scene remaining alone in your memory. As to some other things (localities, and objects not subject to change), having continued habitually familiar to you, they are to you simply, if I may so express it, what they *are*, and not what they stand pictured exclusively in remembrance—a remembrance that lays the scene in a far-off time.

I have still to confess, and am somewhat vexed at it, the total want of power in my mind to make *one* person of, *you two*, the *boy* whom I so vividly remember, and the middle-aged *man* whom I had the surprise and pleasure of seeing one day here. I even doubt whether, if I were to pass weeks and months daily with you, I should be able to make anything like a complete personal identification. I do believe the John Purser of far toward forty years since, would be continually coming in upon me as if he must be, or have been, somebody else than the person I was actually seeing and conversing with. It would, no doubt, be partly the same with respect to *Mrs.* Purser, of whom I retain a distinct image; though my being so much less familiar with her at that time might somewhat lessen this insuperable sense of *doubleness*. The experiment, at any rate, would, to me, be very curious and interesting.

. . . . My dear friend, the retrospect over which I have

been glancing, pensively as a prevailing sentiment, seems to carry us rather afar on a track which we can tread no more ; but, how reduced to nothing is the distance in comparison of the stupendous *prospect* ! While called upon to be grateful for all that a good Providence has done for us in the past, and to implore pardon in the name of our Lord, for every thing which we have cause to wish had been differently done on our part, we are solemnly admonished to be looking forward with increasing seriousness to the *grand Futurity*. Whatever may be our appointed remaining time on earth, we are sure it is little enough for a due preparation to go safely and happily forward into that eternal Hereafter. . . .

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CLXXXIX. TO MRS. STOKES.

Bourton, Oct. 7, 1836.

MY DEAR MADAM,—(but rather say, my good and dear old friend). . . . In this house and vicinity there are many things to remind me of the past. I have not in my mind a strongly *associating* principle. There are certain temporary, involuntary, and apparently *casual* moods of feeling, which, in whatever place they may occur, revive the images and sentiments of the past more vividly than they would be brought back by the mere force of objects and places associated with those retrospective interests. Still, there are here objects, apartments, garden-walks, with which an interesting and pensive memory is inseparably connected. They tell me of one inestimable being, united with me here, here separated from me, and now, here or elsewhere, with me no more on earth. I often imagine what it would have been, and would be, to have her with me still. But when I consider what a drooping, suffering life was appointed to her during the latter part of her presence with me, and what I am confident she has gained by the change, the regret for my loss is greatly countervailed by the delight of thinking of her felicity ; of the surpassing superiority of what she has enjoyed, and is enjoying, or all she could have experienced in this mortal state, even had it been much more propitious to



her than it could have been under the circumstances of frail and shattered health, and a painful over-susceptibility of mind. To rejoin her at length, is my earnest desire for her daughters and myself. As to *them*, I am exceedingly far from indulging any gratifying anticipations with respect to *this* life. I have uniformly a melancholy idea of the destiny of women, considering how many kinds of danger, and how much of the grievances and sufferings of life there are often in their allotment. How I marvel at the thoughtless pleasure of parents, in seeing their children grow up, and dreaming about their future prospects! I often say, what is become of their eyes or any of their senses, while there is the actual world around them, to tell them what is the very possible destiny in this life, to say nothing of another, of the young creatures, about whom they have so many thoughtlessly sanguine fancies? I will *hope* better things for these girls; but I never dream *such* dreams, and never did.

Worcester, also, had its reminiscences. What a lapse of years since the first time that I experienced there the cordial friendship, of which I have had so many gratifying proofs, in the long subsequent interval; and since the first of our little social travelling adventures, which were to be followed by our delightful excursions in North Wales. More, much more, than one third part of life, taken at its long reckoning of "three score years and ten," gone away, since that point of our mortal sojourn! How many events, changes, mercies, admonitions, in this long period. Would that the *improvements*, of the most important order, had corresponded to this great sum of the motives, and aids, and progressively louder calls to that improvement. My own reflections are deeply accusatory. I often think, what insupportable melancholy would oppress and overwhelm me, if there were not the grand resource of the one all-sufficient Sacrifice offered for sin. At the same time, let us, each and all, entreat the Divine assistance that whatever remainder of time is reserved for us may be so improved, as to be *greatly the best part* of a life which is so rapidly hastening to its termination.

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CXC. TO J. WADE, ESQ.

December 21, 1836.

.... But what base, worthless wretches those fellows are. It is really grievous and surprising that never once can a sober honest man be found, that will do just the very moderate duty that you require. It makes one sometimes almost ashamed of one's *democracy*, to have so many glaring proofs of the utterly unprincipled character of so large a portion of what are called the "lower orders," in a nation so vaunted for "enlightened," "civilized," "*Christian*," and all that. One is amazed to hear any intelligent advocate of the "*popular rights*," stickling for "*universal suffrage*." Think of such fellows as you have had to do with, being qualified to have a vote in the choice of *legislators*!!

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CXCI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

February 18, 1837.

.... We of this little family are not duly thankful to the protecting Providence for having all escaped, while multitudes in the city and its neighbourhood have been visited, and very many, as I hear, fatally. At this instant I see, through the window, the top of a mourning coach, following a hearse. Strange and sad consideration! that prevailing sickness and death are the *desired—welcomed* (?) means of life, gain, prosperity, to a portion of the fellow mortals of the sufferers and victims. Doctors, druggists, and undertakers, are flourishing on this calamity, like gay flowers about the graves in a church-yard.

The disastrous and, one thinks, unprecedented, season does, at length, give some wavering and reluctant signs of change. The change has not been waited for by the intimations of spring, in snow-drops and crocuses. Welcome are they once more, though they seem to tell me, most pointedly, how short a time it is since their tribe was here before, and, therefore, with what appalling velocity life is running off.

Your guess is true, that I have been though not vio-

lently against my will) very nearly a prisoner during the past ten months. As to "company," dinner-parties, tea-visits, they have been, with very small exception, out of the question. I have been under peremptory medical inhibition to be out in the night-air. A cough, first occasioned by the old cause, the miserable heating, and subsequent chilling from the wet clothes in summer, and renewed at intervals down into the foggy autumn, produced at last an effect which I was forced to regard as somewhat serious—an effusion (not large, and not repeated) of blood, from—Dr. Stenson told me—the windpipe; and, together with prescriptions, enjoined me to keep within the house, and to avoid—one thing and another—as especially preaching, an infrequent, indeed, but now and then occurring exercise. I have been tolerably, though (except on the last point) not punctiliously obsequious, have had no return of the ominous symptom, and have very little cough,—but find myself far more liable to its return, from a very slight cold-taking, than a person sound in the affected part would be.

. . . . As to public and parliamentary affairs you complain that we are to have the same old battled businesses over again. But how else can any good be gained, against the obstinate resisters of all improvement? As O'Connell was lately telling them in Ireland, it is only by keeping at it, by persisting, reiterating, hammering, that an effectual impression can be made on the public mind, and, through that, on the hostile obstinacy, or sluggish indifference, of those on whom immediately the business depends. Some parts of that business are of an importance and an urgency quite portentous. Think of the condition of *Ireland*, in the event of the frustration of the measures in its favour—such a frustration as should not leave any hope of a success within near and assured prospect. Those who can coolly look at, and hazard, the probable consequences, must be either villains or madmen. . . .

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## CXCI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

Stapleton, April 5, 1837.

.... I do hope in the divine clemency that another visitation is not approaching you.

.... I remember a man of great piety and intelligence saying, "I think I could be willing to follow all my children to the grave, on the condition of having a satisfactory assurance of their happiness beyond it." This was said in relation to the death of my son, concerning whom I felt this assurance. And I think I could cordially adopt his words with respect to my remaining children. There is something more pleasing than sad in the idea, if God willed it so, of seeing them happily gone before me; of not leaving them behind, but seeing them safe out of an evil world before I quit it,—of seeing the end of their dangers, and being finally sure of them. *Females* I have said, especially; for only think what a lot is that of a very large proportion of women!

Still I will hope you are not destined to be yet deprived of so beloved a daughter. But, whatever be the sovereign appointment, I trust in the divine mercy that her mind will be relieved from its painful apprehensions. Let it dwell much on the gracious and consolatory aspects of religion. This I am sure you will, without any suppression of faithfulness to truth, inculcate upon her. You will tell her to do justice to the Divine Mercy by believing its thousandfold declarations and promises. But it is not that she doubts the Divine willingness to bless and save, or the all-sufficient merit of our Lord and Saviour. It is that she fears her mind is not in the right state to receive, to appropriate, that supreme good. But is it in the right state to *seek* it? *That* is the essential thing. Is she deeply in earnest to obtain it? Is she resolved to make humble persevering application to the throne of the heavenly grace for *the right state of mind itself*, and all the blessings which belong to it? *Then* there is the strongest cause for hope and confidence. To doubt it would be to distrust the mercy, the declarations of God. This genuine earnestness itself *is*, so far, the very condition of soul that is desired. If faithfully maintained, it engages Him that created the soul to work

in it the whole happy fitness for its eternal salvation. But it is superfluous for me to be writing thus. It is what she is constantly hearing from you, and, I trust, receiving with a consolatory influence. I shall be greatly interested to hear from you soon what are the appearances, as to the debilitated mortal part, and what the feelings of the spirit which so precariously dwells in it; and I pray the Father of mercies to lift up the light of his countenance both on her and yourself.

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CXCIII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, April 15, 1837.*

.... You are hardly unaware that there is something a little fallacious in your mood of thinking and feeling about activity in public affairs. If all well-principled and able men were to indulge that mood, the great interests of the community would go desperately to corruption and ruin. Just think, for want of the requisite number, activity, and co-operation of such men, what a condition those interests have been in, for a long succession of years, up to the commencement of the recent national rousing. A vast hell of wars; bad legislation; profligacy in all administration; all correction of old rotten institutions resisted; total indifference to the uneducated, barbarous condition of the people; every kind of corruption practised with impunity, under protection of a monopoly of power; hatred, almost or wholly to the length of persecution, of those who have dared to expose the iniquities and preach reform. Has it not struck you, over and over again, that *every* part of the system, on coming at last under resolute investigation, has turned out worse than all previous opinion or suspicion had surmised? Now are good men to be told, that all this is no concern of theirs, and on the plea of not involving themselves in the turmoil of worldly and political affairs, quietly and piously to let it all go on, from bad to worse; to leave it all in the same profligate hands,—till Providence shall work a miracle for its reformation? It is but slight rebuke that you will incur for *one* particular in your avowal, that

you "care far more about my poor Catherine and John, than for either king or country, Church or State;" but when you say the same thing of what constitutes the collective community, with their immense collective interests, do you forget that there are unnumbered thousands of *other* Johns and Catherines, to be affected for good or evil, in numberless ways, by the beneficial or injurious operation of the national system? If all had acted on the principle of caring little about any but their own, we should have had no public spirited men; no patriots; no magnanimous vindicators of the rights of the oppressed; none who, while their *own families* were the first in their regard, yet felt indignant that myriads of *other families* were the worse, in various ways and degrees, for a corrupt and pernicious management of the concerns of the community. The crisis of the affairs of this country, balancing and wavering between the growing impulse toward improvements of incalculable value, and the powerful, obstinate resistance made by the old corrupt system—a crisis, including the perfectly tremendous state and possibilities of Ireland, and involving the interests of perhaps a million of families there, are not, methinks, matters which any of us should deem insignificant in comparison with our own domestic interests. Unless a vast number and combination of men, while maintaining all due regard for what they respectively have at home, will yet take a zealous and untiring concern in these public affairs, designs of immense utility will be frustrated, and there will inevitably be a long course of agitation, danger, and disaster.

. . . . So ends my sermon, and most likely with the same effect as too many other sermons. . . .

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CXCIV. TO J. PURSER, JUN., ESQ.

*Stapleton, May 30, 1837.*

. . . . Many of my recollections of early life have faded, and they never had the captivation and complacency which some men seem to feel. But the sojourn in Dublin is often revived in my memory with peculiar distinctness, and pleas-

ing though pensive interest. In the time and scene thus recalled, you, as in your early juvenility, are a conspicuous figure. I have a *very* marked image of your appearance and looks—of which I dare say you yourself have retained no image at all, no more than I have of mine, as at that or an earlier stage of life.—Can you shape any thing like a defined conception of what were your prevailing feelings, notions, tastes, aspirations, at that time?

What an immensity of things have passed over, and away from, every earthly scene in this interval of forty years! You say that in Dublin I should “find much to revive old recollections.” I almost doubt it. A few localities excepted, there must be so complete a sweep from the stage, that the things for *recollection to hold by* are gone. There cannot be the lingering remainders, to recall what *was*. As to the living world, it would be just wholly new, not connected with the preceding by retaining still some portion of it, to verify the relationship, to show it to be in continuity and succession. Why, there is not probably one single human being, besides yourself and your wife, that would be, or could be made, an object of my recollection. One other there would have been, it seems, very recently. My eye was very strongly arrested by the name of Mrs. Butler. How well I remember her! What, then, she has lived throughout this wide interval, approaching to half a century, and having not been a young person at its so remote commencement! She *would* have been one of the diminutive number of the vital threads of connection (if I may so express it) between the existing generation and that which has vanished. But the feeling at sight of her would have been something like what should say, “Why are you lingering here, belonging so plainly as you do to the great company that is departed?”

The class of us the most advanced in age are for the most part so blended and implicated with the next in order, and the next after that, that it requires some thought to detach ourselves so as to see plainly where we stand. We are apt to be looking too much around us, and behind us, to observe how near we are to the *brink*. If even I, at the age of nearly sixty-seven, and much apart from society and worldly concerns, need continual admonitions about this, you, at a dozen or more years behind me, and so closely surrounded

by numerous and diversified family interests, with business in addition, will be very apt to need every monitory intimation how much of life is gone, and how fast the remainder is going.

For myself, I have recently had some extra and ominous hints, or rather very direct warnings. A succession of colds and coughs, within the last year or two, added to a relaxation of the throat, which twenty or more years since disabled me for regular preaching, has had the effect of leaving me liable to an effusion of blood, from the rupture of some vessel adjacent to the throat. This has occurred several times within the last half year, the worst instance of it being within the last few days. I am not advised that this involves or indicates "immediate danger" (that is the phrase you know), but that it imperatively speaks the necessity of great caution, medical assistance, the avoidance "for the present" (another of the phrases) of all considerable exertion in the way of speaking, and a total final interdict on preaching.

You speak of "grey hairs and some debility of action." Quite in the natural course; and you will lay your account with an increase (perhaps in an increasing *ratio*) of these significant intimations. Yet I hope you will yet long (but in how modified sense of that word!) retain a competence of strength and health for much useful activity, combined with a considerable degree of the enjoyment of life;—still with a constant recollection, that it is an *introduction*, and is verging continually and fast toward a solemn junction with that to which it is the introduction. And what will *that* be? Oh, the mystery of that great Hereafter!

I congratulate you sincerely on the pleasure, and every other advantage, caused you by an excellent wife and—*eight* descendants! You would show me, you say, *six sons*;—but I should be *frightened*;—nay, what is to insure me against actual *danger*? Six young Irishmen,—and Irishmen being such as you describe them, that is to say, of "ferocious disposition," needing strong coercion for the safety of those who have to do with them. Assuredly I should not dare to confront these redoubtable *six* one moment sooner or longer than you were present, and indeed Mrs. P. in addition, in order to secure the mitigating



lenient effect of female influence. With this and a few other provisoes I should enter your house (castle) with very great interest, and, by the time I was certain of *safety*, should stay some time there, and thereabout, with very great pleasure. I thank you sincerely for your kind invitation. I have never quite surrendered the idea and the hope of revisiting Dublin; but I am become to a strange degree a sort of local fixture; not having, for instance, till last summer, reached so far as London for sixteen years. And now the recent indications as to health tend to throw doubtfulness on all projects and prospects. . . . .

Every body in his right senses here deploras the state of Ireland, and abhors that Ascendency which has hitherto been its plague, and has yet a formidable power to frustrate the endeavours at a better policy. Our government is in a strangely anomalous and perilous position. There will be a long protracted and mortal conflict.

. . . . I have just heard of the death of Mrs. Osborn of Cork, for whom, as Ann Richards, I had a great partiality. I have regretted to understand that she was a confirmed Socinian; greatly regretted it; for it does appear to me a tremendous hazard to go into the other world in that character. The exclusion from Christianity of that which a Socinian rejects would reduce *me* instantly to black despair.

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OXF. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

*Stapleton, June 2, 1837.*

. . . . It must be since I wrote to you that I had a long conversation with Mrs. J——, lately of Hebden Bridge, in which I obtained several points of information concerning the *terra incognita* of that neighbourhood. As to Hebden Bridge itself, she described it as stretched out into a long continuity of houses, reaching I forget how far. This, on a more moral account than its breaking up the old picture in my imagination, did not please me at all. It was just saying there were so many more *sinner*s in the locality. Unless mankind were better, an augmented number is nothing to be pleased with. On the contrary I am always apt to be

pleased at seeing vacated sites, and houses deserted and in ruins. This gratification is too seldom afforded in these times. It is a considerable number of years since I had it to my full contentment, at a place a good way down on the west coast, where a score or two of houses, visited some years before by the *reform* of a fire, remained as dilapidated walls going fast to decay. I have always a restive feeling that knows not how to go into pleasure, at the promises sometimes made to the Jews in the Old Testament, of a prodigiously multiplied posterity. Now you are smiling (or affecting to smile) at all this as a cynical whim, a wanton perversity. But pray now, do look at the collective moral and religious state of the species, even in this so vaunted nation, exhibiting so bad a preponderance of what is not good, in the high and alone satisfactory sense; and soberly consider whether an augmentation of such an existence be really a cause for exultation.

A better age, both for this and every other country, will come, assuredly. But do you not sometimes muse in a kind of gloomy wonder on the present dark aspect of the world, —in which even the precursory signs of the *approach* are so faint or dubious? You were not, I think, quite so sanguine in early life as I was. Recollecting my morning crude prospective dreams, I can imagine what a damp it would have been, what a heavy snow in May, if I could have foreseen, at the distance of about half a century forward, the state of the world just as it actually is at this day. In those visions there was, no doubt, much of what a sound mature judgment might at the time have convicted of folly. The grand excitement had far too little in it of a moral and religious principle, far too little recognition of the Governor of the world, to authorize such magnificent anticipations or moral and political good. But still, methinks, it might (before the proof) have been assumed as probable that such a prodigious awakening of human energy would be directed by that sovereign Power to the destruction of a much larger portion of the fearful system of evils that still lies and tyrannizes on the human race. On every field of thought the awful mystery of the Divine Government surrounds us with its darkness, and abases our speculations and presumptions.

The political state of this nation is becoming formidable, the war being *mortal* between the two orders of principles, with their respectively arrayed masses. No peace but by the subjugation of one of the antagonist powers. Which is it to be? Not the *democratic* certainly, for it is in a process of continually augmenting force, notwithstanding any temporary interruptions and defeats. But it is in vain to calculate the duration of the conflict before the other can be prostrated, possessed as it is of such vast advantages.

How do the affairs among you as between the Church and Dissenters shape themselves? I hope the latter will not be wanting in spirit to assert themselves. They see clearly now that they have no other remedy but what is in their own hands. Let them every where avail themselves of that, and the government will at last be forced, even for the *Church's sake*, to do them justice. Our great desideratum is (what we cannot have yet, nor for a long time) a *genuine* House of Commons. In the present thing so called there are many scores of knaves and fools who got there by the vilest means.

*We* (you, your wife, and I) shall not live to see any great amendment in the world. Shall we, when in that *other* to which we are going, receive any information of the changes on that which we shall have left? But think of the stupendous change and novelty of *being in another world!* And it will not be very long before. Each of us in near approach to *seventy!* I believe you have both had good health. I hope you still have—*for that age*. I have been in this respect highly favoured through life. But recently,—I may say at this hour, I have some very monitory omens, being under rigid medical treatment in consequence of the rupture of some vessel in the neighbourhood of the throat, indicated by a very considerable effusion of blood twice within ten days. I am told that great and protracted care may arrest the evil. But it is a formidable intimation; and will, I hope, have the effect, under divine influence, of rendering me more earnest in preparation for the demolition, at whatever time, of the whole tabernacle. A circumstance of the same kind, but not in the same degree,

occurred to me about half a year since. So long exempt from any recurrence, I have not been duly careful. . . .

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CXCVI. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

June 9, 1837.

. . . . It often occurs to me, when thinking of striking spectacles here and there on the earth that I can never see, "But I shall infallibly behold, at no distant time, something incomparably *more* striking, new, and marvellous." To behold, to be in the midst of, another economy, another world! And with an amazing change, of the very *manner*, personally, of existence; to be in communication with a new order of realities by a totally different medium of perception; having, in relinquishing this world, relinquished also the entire organization by which the spirit maintained its connection with it.

Imagine a very brief, as nearly as might be a sudden, transition from the ordinary state of feeling, to that which would be caused at sight of the most striking phenomenon on earth; and then imagine, just at that highest excitement of emotion, an instant transition by death into the other world;—would not this second rush of amazement on the soul transcend the previous one to a far mightier degree than that previous one would have surpassed the ordinary state of feeling?

But again, and again, comes the thought, "Though I shall never behold the supposed grand phenomena of this world, *that other* transcendent amazement I am certain to experience; and the more mighty will it be that I have no previous knowledge or conjecture concerning the manner of it."

And how mortifying, what reason for intense self-reproach, that with this certainty before me, and in a continual approximation, the mysterious prospect should not have a more habitually commanding influence over me;—over my thoughts, devotions, and habits of life! A correction, a reformation, a renovation of feeling, is the thing imperatively demanded. . . .

CXCVII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

September 23, 1837.

. . . . This is All-Saints' day with the Independent tribe in Bristol;—speeches by exhibitors fresh from all nations, peoples, and languages. I was something like disposed to force my inclination, and go to see and hear,—for the *useful* sake, to myself I mean, of witnessing the character and varieties of the spectacle; but the inveterate repugnance was invincible. But really I wish it had not. For I am so totally secluded here that I have no *immediate* impression of what men are, or are doing. . . . .

It seems that even you . . . . could not keep the soul of which you are the owner from getting a whirl in the late great vortex; wishing, hoping, fearing; disappointed, mortified, indignant;—just all the same unhallowed emotions as one's self. It is truly a grievous result, and a disastrous predicament. Interminable war, now; with very small and dearly-bought successes to the liberal cause; merely an exemption from absolute defeat; the grand measures of national improvement (*education* among the rest) either not (from hopelessness) attempted, or contemptuously quashed. Why is this suffered to be—under the government of the Supreme Authority, the only Potentate? Just because the nation is wicked and is to be plagued. It is a judicial dispensation. This is the idea often enforced on one's mind, in looking over the state of the world. What a most glaring instance is Spain! One would think that it is beyond mere human stupidity and perversity to manage the nation's affairs so wretchedly. There must be a special *Divine* malediction, dooming that barbarous, cruel, superstitious, and bigoted people to miseries from which there seems no escape; their counsels and proceedings under a continual infatuation; the most favourable occasions lost; the efficient means systematically thrown away; the whole condition of life's interests in distraction. . . . .

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## CXCVIII. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

*Stapleton, Nov. 25, 1837.*

. . . . Our good M. P. has but little in prospect, in that public capacity, to set against what in his private one he feels so painfully. He enters the service justly indignant against every party, and has little or nothing better to look forward to than a long, vexatious, and nearly useless course of toil and conflict, perhaps to end in a break-up of the whole rotten concern. I wish he were out of it, if only there were another honest man to take his place. But that sort of thing is most scandalously scarce—the sort of thing, that is to say, which every man in the world ought to be.—It is fearful to think what the final account must be, at the award of infallible Justice, for the immense multitude of accountable creatures. And how desperately heedless of all such consideration they are, even those who, as in our nation and time, are the most instructed, or have the means of being so, and are therefore the most accountable. . . . But these politics run away with one, even when talking to old friends, with whom one has so many recollections, lively or pensive, and has spent so many hours, days, and weeks, amidst interests, occupations, and scenes, far apart from political affairs. Lately I was recollecting our first interview, when Mr. Coles brought a stranger, in whom I could not foresee so cordial a friend, for so long a period; as to whom and myself it was little within the probability of life's duration that I should at this (then very far off) time be writing to him. I proceeded on, from that original point of remembrance, through the successive periods of the long lapse of nearly thirty years; dwelling a while on some of the most remarkable times and scenes, down to the social weeks, or rather months, of the last year; and to the time when, excepting a few pleasing hours, I was disappointed of seeing you here. A long series of interesting reminiscences,—combining what is gratifying in friendship with what is memorable in situations and incidents. All this is of the past!—and the review brings us to the solemn reflection, what a very large portion of our allotted sojourn on earth has been expended and has vanished, between the first term and the last of the retrospect; which reflection passes

immediately into the emphatic monition, how near we are coming to the termination of that sojourn, to the moment of transition to another world; and how earnest and habitual should be our solicitude and our diligence to be prepared for that world where there may be a happy and an endless friendship. . . . .

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## CXCIX. TO JAMES FAWCETT, ESQ.

*February 24, 1838.*

. . . . The feelings with which I heard of the decease (not till several weeks after the event) of my valued old friend, your excellent father, were pensive even to sadness. He and Mr. Greaves were the peculiarly favourite friends of my youth. And so deeply fixed was my conviction of his virtues, and so faithful my memory of his cordial kindness at that far-off period, and additionally testified by his letters, that I have retained invariably, my friendly regard throughout the long absence of not less than thirty-five years. Since the information of the mournful event, I have often retraced in thought the scenes, the intercourse, the little social adventures and incidents, of that early time; his person, voice, habits, and domestic associates and circumstances, vividly presented to my imagination. I cannot but feel regret, now when it is in vain, at the entire loss of personal intercourse, caused by great distance, my dislike of travelling, my feeling no attraction to my native place, as such, and our respective occupations. I am wondering how he appeared in advanced age; the image of him in my mind being exclusively that of his appearance in youth, or before the attainment of middle age. I saw him for the last time, one transient hour, in the neighbourhood of London: but I think it was not *within* the long period that I have mentioned. Doubtless if we had met at any recent time, without being previously apprised, it would have been, till explanation, as perfect strangers; mutually the victims and monuments of Time.

. . . . You will all have been consoled amidst your affectionate sorrow, by the consideration of his happy

exchange; an event deferred, too, for the sake of those whom he loved and who loved him, to so late a period of life that any great prolongation would have been a stage of infirmity, decline, and perhaps the pain which inflict, as it were, a portion of death before the termination of life. He had lived also to see his family advanced to maturity, acting their appointed parts in life; and all, I hope and trust, entered on and pursuing a course which will bring each of them one day to an end like his. You have the pleasure also of reflecting on his consistent, honourable, useful life, from his pious childhood to his latest day;—a well-sustained religious character, for, I may say, *sixty years*, for he must at his decease have been bordering on *seventy*.

A loss which nothing now in this world can adequately compensate will have caused your mother a painful sense of desolation, at an age which no longer retains the elasticity of spirit, the animated force of reaction, by which younger people, in active excitement and with life before them, are so soon relieved from the pressure of such a dispensation. I trust resignation to the Divine will, the looking forward to a better world, combined with the affectionate interest in her children, and the pleasure of seeing them wise and good, and favoured by Providence, will impart to her a consolation effectual to cheer the remainder of her life. How well I remember her cheerfulness, her vivacity of spirit, near forty years since. . . . I am glad of [your] brother's favourable prospects for usefulness and happiness, and hope that a name so long honoured in connexion with religion will long continue faithfully in that connexion. . . .

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OC. TO THE REV. DR. PRICE.

*February, 1838.*

. . . . Professor Elton of Rhode Island, has sent me a very curious book of the date indeed of three or four years back, written by an "Honourable Mr. Durfee, Supreme Judge in that island." It is a poem nearly or quite as long as *Paradise Lost*, under the grotesque title of "*What-Cheer!*" which was an exclamation of a party of friendly savages on a



particular occasion, very long since. The *time* is some two centuries since; the starting-point-fact is a case of persecution by the rigorous good Puritan bigots of New England, against an assertor of religious freedom, a man memorable and venerable in the American ecclesiastical history. This persecution drives him out into the wilderness, in the horrid snowy desolation of mid-winter, still heroically trusting in Providence. He goes among the savages, and his adventures with them, and the strange wild characteristic scenes and transactions in their society, form the eventful narrative. I hardly know what, exactly, to say of the *poetry*; but it is at least strikingly graphical, perspicuous in detail and narrative, and in a plain unaffected language, a little of the antiquish, and perfectly suitable to the subject. It is founded, in part, on the actual recorded history of the *hero*; and, as to the general character of the exhibition, seems a faithful picture of the *then* manners, customs and notions of the Aborigines. I dare say there can have been no notice of such a production in the Eclectic, or probably any other of our Reviews. And I think a moderate article of considerable interest and curiosity might be made of it. With your leave I will try. . . .

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CCI. TO THE REV. THOMAS COLES.

August 3, 1838.

. . . . It gives me very special pleasure to hear of the very favourable state and prospects of your situation; not the less so, of course, that I have always wished that you might find good reason to decide against transferring your public services from where they had been patiently prosecuted so long. It is highly gratifying, that in what may be called the autumn of your life and ministry, a kind of spring season should return in the congregation, in the growing up of a youthful race in a disposition of mind as to many of them, so pleasing and hopeful. I will hope, that in this you will find, in no small degree, a reward of your patient perseverance through years of less pleasing experience, through various discouragements and vexations.

You are reported in a high state of health, promising, I hope, a long postponement of the infirmities of declining age. How long would you wish to live, if the term were supposed to be placed at your choice? If the Power, who has the disposal, might be supposed to put before you a succession of figures, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90,—and say—"Choose, and it shall be so," *unconditionally* as to what should be the attendant circumstances of each term, *that* being left in total uncertainty as to *your* knowledge—would you be greatly perplexed? would it take you a long time and hesitation to decide on which of the numbers you should place your finger, that act, that single touch being an absolute, irrevocable decision? One is often reproachfully reminded, that with our confident belief of the grand superiority of another life and scene, if he had the full, deliberate consciousness of a due preparation for it, there would require an effort, a repressive effort of submission to the Divine disposal, to prevent an ever-rising impatience of the soul to escape from this dark and sinful world, and go out on the sublime adventure.

You now stand, as it were, between two equal divisions of your family, three of them remaining on earth, and three you feel assured in the enjoyment of a happier existence elsewhere. You have thus a social and family relationship, in equal proportions, with two different provinces of the great kingdom. . . . .

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CCII. TO DR. STENSON

1838.

We must acknowledge, my dear sir, that it is well there should be a sanguine spirit in the enterprises for reforming the world. Enthusiasm is as necessary as any other element. A cool, strict, cautious calculation, would never give *impulse* enough. How many things have been effected, which any thing short of this enthusiasm would have deemed it folly to attempt. Think of Luther! I have lately read, with much interest, part of a recent French work, "Memoirs of

Luther, written by himself.”\* The title is verified by the plan, which is that of selecting and putting in orderly series, the great numbers of passages in Luther’s books, letters, &c., which relate personally to himself, with only sometimes a few sentences by the editor to link them together. The effect of the work is, that while the great reformer stands forth, in all his energy and intrepidity, there is manifested a sensibility, a softness and tenderness of feeling, which one would not have expected in so lion-like a piece of humanity. Who would have imagined him looking with a gentle emotion, at a little bird in a tree? The good and noble fellow was sometimes, even after he was become so publicly conspicuous, so poor that he could not afford himself a new coat, and tells how he was forced to pawn a silver goblet, which he happened to possess by inheritance, as his only article of value. When far on in his life and victorious success, his spirit sometimes drooped quite into melancholy at sight of the perversities, the refractoriness, the jars, the counteractions, and self-interested competitions, which arose among even the reformers. . . .

\* *Memoirs de Luther, &c., par M. Michelet, &c.,* since translated by W. Hazlitt, Esq., for *Bogue’s European Library*. London, 1846.

## CHAPTER IX.

LAST REVIEW—LETTER TO MR. GREAVES—VISIT TO BOURTON IN 1840—DEATH OF MR. COLES—VISIT TO LONDON IN 1841—ILLNESS—LAST VISIT TO BOURTON IN 1842—THE CHARTISTS AND THE ANTI-CORN-LAW LEAGUE—NATIONAL EDUCATION—LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

1839—1843.

MR. FOSTER closed his literary labours by an article on *Polack's New Zealand*, which appeared in the *Eclectic Review* for July, 1839.

In a letter to Mr. Greaves\* (April 25, 1840), to whom during his residence at Brearley he had stood in the twofold relation of friend and pupil, he reviews the circumstances of their early acquaintance and course in after-life. "What a width of time it is to look back over!—approaching to half a century. How far those youthful interests, those social scenes, those amicable colloquies, those little adventures, have receded away! How many with whom we were habitually or occasionally associated, have vanished from the world! How changed

\* William Greaves, Esq., who subsequently removed to Clapham, where he died in the same week with Mr. Foster, was in early life classical tutor at Brearley, an office for which he was admirably fitted, both by his attainments as a scholar, and by all the higher moral qualifications required in an instructor of youth. "He was a singularly amiable man, full of benevolence and kind consideration for the wants and feelings of others. His heart was formed for friendship, and he had an acute discernment of what was proper in human conduct and the various relations of life. His taste was formed on the best models, and though not an author himself, he was ever ready to undertake all kinds of useful offices for his literary friends."

are we ourselves from what we were then! And then the reflection, not the less striking for being too self-evident almost to be put in words, that all these—can return no more!

“It would be very interesting to me to have a long quiet comparison and intercommunication with you, of our respective and mutual remembrances, seated alone by the nightly fire-side. Some of these recollections would be simply those of *fact*; some would be invested with grave and pensive sentiment. And they would have the interest of being exclusive to ourselves, as the solitary occupants, so to speak, of a departed and far back tract of time; belonging to a period which none around us belong to; the survivors of those who shared its interests with us, but share them no more. We should be something like two men left on a solitary shore by a wreck in which their companions had perished. We should feel to *belong* to the race who were then our coevals, whatever subsequent interests and relations we have been involved in. You can in mere memory go back to those times and scenes; but can you recall the order of ideas and feelings in such manner as to reanimate them, as it were, for a transitory moment, so as to have a lively sense of what they were? For myself, I have very long lost any such power. A great difference will have been made in your case from mine, as to the continuity and prolongation of interest in the scene of our early life and in its inhabitants, by your practice of rather frequently revisiting it. It is not, as to me, like an insulated territory, with a wide waste of sea between. Your disconnexion from the social economy there (I mean our *early* associates) has been gradual, by the successive decease of one and another. And perhaps in some certain degree they were replaced to you by those not of the *primeval*

age. Whereas I have been nearly forty years (!) withdrawn totally from personal communication. I cannot exactly tell how it came to be so. My parents survived a considerable number of years after the time that I saw them last. But besides the immediate circumstances of my remote local situations, I felt a strong recoil at the thought of going to see them for absolutely a last time. I knew they were surrounded by kind friends, and sent them a little pecuniary assistance. I confess also that I feared lest I should witness a painfully sensible decline of mental faculties. I heard of the decease of one and another of the plain worthy persons (the Greenwoods, for instance, whom you will remember) to whom I had been partial. For our coeval friend Fawcett, I felt invariably a most genuine esteem and regard. But progressive years were still bringing additional circumstances to diminish the inducements to a revisit of the place of my nativity. And always the thought that such a visit would be made with the consciousness it was to be the last. I may add, a great aversion to long tedious travelling; and also, that during a very considerable portion of the long period, I could ill spare the expense.

“Probably neither of our lives since that remote period of separation would furnish a long, varied, eventful history. It is strange to think how short a record would suffice for *my* seventy years, though a sojourn in a considerable variety of situations. Great and marked *changes for the better* would be the gratifying thing to tell of; but one's *self*, one's very self, is so sadly the same in every place, and through every stage;—the greater reproach as Providence has been faithfully kind. With some minor deductions I have been highly favoured in respect to health, in point at least of exemption from painful and oppressive disorders; having never been confined one day

to my bed in half a century, and having never in my life suffered from headache. My eyes, indeed, have hardly been in a sound condition during the last forty years, but never so as to be long disabled for their valuable function, with the aid, for many years past, of strongly magnifying spectacles. I am, however, not without apprehension that their service cannot last with any long protraction of life. . . . In one point our experience has been parallel; each has possessed, through a long course of years, the blessing of an estimable and affectionate *wife*; and many years since each has lost it.—But think what they have attained and enjoyed since they left us! Would we, if we might, recall them from their happy abodes? I have the same consolation respecting a son, who withered away when near the age of maturity, years before the decease of his mother. Your Mary's amiable descendant, now branching out into—how many?—will contribute much, I have no doubt, to cheer your evening of life. To me are left two daughters. . . . Though within three miles of our great town, we live in complete seclusion; having very few acquaintance, and almost nothing of what may be called visiting company, either here or in the town. I have long felt, and every year more of, disinclination to mixed society; and of the very diminutive number of more select individuals whom it was a pleasure to see, no less than three, of my own or even a more advanced age, have died within less than the last year and a half; so fast and urgently are admonitions repeated; in addition and enforcement to those brought within the last two or three years in the very palpable signs and infirmities of old age. It is very far from likely that I am appointed (and how should it be desirable?) to make any near approach, I do not say to my father's age of nearly ninety—but even my mother's—past eighty

On my already long life I look back with little complacency (except as to the goodness of Divine Providence), rather, with heavy condemnation.\* Comparatively with what it might and should have been, it has been an indolent and profitless life,—of extremely slight intellectual discipline, very defective cultivation and advance of personal piety, and little faithful exertion to do good—a most powerful antidote to all pharisaism; from which, indeed, I do think I am wholly clear—and strange if I were not. But for that blessed refuge in the atonement of our Mediator I should be in utter despair. But *that*, Heaven be praised, is all-sufficient and alone.

“ I named ‘ intellectual discipline ;’ I should be ashamed to write such a word as *study* ; anything that ought to have answered to that name, has been, to the last degree, shallow and desultory. Not for want of copious aids, which should also have been excitements. For I have most foolishly accumulated books, to the amount of several thousand volumes, some of them of a costly order, and, collectively taken, at an expense which, with such limited means, I had no business to afford, and did not afford without often trenching on much more useful and necessary expenditures. And it would be most mortifying to me if, besides, I were to hear a true voice telling me, how many of these same volumes have been *wholly* unread.

“ . . . . My memory, never good, has become so miserably faithless, that reading is of little use to me. Do *you* keep up your taste and habits in that way ?

\* “ Much as I am condemning men and mankind, I do really think that a larger portion of accusatory thought is directed on the evil at home than on that of all the rest of the world put together. Very often I am amazed and confounded to think how I can have lived so long to make such miserable attainments in plain, vital, practical Christianity, and to think how grievously, prodigiously difficult it is to subdue, or even reduce, any one, great or small, of the evil principles of this our evil nature.”—*Mr. Foster to Dr. Stenson.*



" My political and anti-hierarchical feelings and opinions have been but little modified by age. And their abatement is little likely to be a consequence of the present glaring manifestation of aristocratic arrogance and high-church intolerance. I meet with no thoughtful man who does not apprehend, that the course of national affairs will, after a while, be precipitated to some fearful extremity or catastrophe.

" But, my dear friend, let me not seem to forget that this is a communication between two persons who will soon have done with sublunary concerns. You are, I think, two or three years in advance of me. Both approaching the extreme verge. A few years more, at the utmost, and where shall we be? Oh may our dwelling and our meeting be in a far better and happier economy; where already so many of our dear departed friends are exulting in a final, eternal escape from all evil; to which contemplative thought often tries to follow them, with the earnest but unanswered questions—where?—what manner of existence and employment?—But suffice it that they are happy, and that we are invited to go and see, and to mingle our happiness with theirs. Earnest assiduous preparation, then, is the solemn concern of this concluding portion of our life."

In the summer of 1840 Mr. Foster visited his friends at Bourton. Writing to Mr. Hill (June 30) he says, " There is nothing to tell you of here. I am in a most worthy and friendly family, and have been met with marks of pleasure by the remaining few of the good people with whom I was acquainted or intimate in a period of residence which ended something more than *twenty years since!* How few they are, and how changed in appearance! And doubtless I appear to them changed no less. I am not, I hope, unthankful to the good Providence that was indulgent to me when here, and has not deserted me during the long course

of years since and elsewhere. But a review of my life—of myself—back through all these years, brings bitter reflections on the wretched deficiencies, neglects, and vanities, of a life that might have been (*might* have been!) wholly, earnestly, and delightfully, devoted to God and Christ. My daily and almost hourly prayer is, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner!’ I do think, that if there be any one thing that I am fully clear of, it is self-righteousness. I am sometimes almost afraid I shall err in praying so little against this, in consequence of feeling (as I think) so very absolute an extirpation of it from my mind.”

In another letter to the same friend (July 9) he says, “I look with pensive, and not a little of painful emotion, at the rooms I frequented, the house I inhabited, the rural walks which I trod, during a course of many years, since the end of which a much longer series has passed away. It was here I formed, and for a long time had the happiness of an union, now many years since dissolved. But the pain of a more austere kind than that of *pensiveness* is from the reflection, to how little purpose, of the highest order, the long years here, and subsequently elsewhere, have been consumed away—how little sedulous and earnest cultivation of internal piety—how little even of mental improvement—how little of zealous devotement to God, and Christ, and the best cause. Oh, it is a grievous and sad reflection; and it drives me to the great and only resource, to say, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner!’—I also most earnestly implore that, in one way or other, what may remain of my life may be better, far better, than the long-protracted past. PAST!—what a solemn and almost tremendous word it is—when pronounced in the reference in which I am here repeating it! . . . .

“After several weeks spent here, with a throwing aside of a cumbrous task or two, which I was very desirous to

work off my hands, I have the *horrid* business before me, as soon as there shall be a space of true summer weather, of going about what I have shrunk from, one year after another, all the while knowing it to be necessary, of making something like a clear *reformation* of my part of the house, which is infested with the dust, damp, book-worms, and chaos of all sorts of accumulations of jumbled valuables and rubbish. . . . I must be in superintendence of the business myself, taking as small a part of the hard work as I can help. This ugly transaction will take, even with fine weather, several weeks; and by the time it is ended I shall very much want to sit down motionless and quiet and also to try whether I can make some little use of the room for its proper business. How it ever *is* to be done, I do not venture yet even to imagine. It is a hard matter of *faith* that it *can* be done at all."

On his return to Stapleton he writes (July 24), "The Augean business here has not yet been entered on. Besides the shrinking horror, the weather has been untoward, from wet and cold. If the present apparent promise of its 'taking up' shall prove true, I must force myself to the resolution (I mean I hope I shall be *forced* to the resolution—you know by what power), to make a beginning with the beginning of next week. . . . A few days since, as a very rare occurrence, I yielded to the solicitation of a curious literary acquaintance from Leicester, to have a look of inspection into the den, of which he said he had heard frightful reports, made on surmise. And though I assured him, in the way of preparation, that they could not, though made on conjecture, without actual knowledge, have exceeded the truth, he appeared fairly taken aback at the spectacle, and muttered, 'This *is* chaos indeed!'"

Though all the assistance was given to Mr. Foster which he would allow, in this troublesome and fatiguing business,

the exertions he made, together with the extreme sultriness of the season, obliged him for a time to remit it; and when accomplished, he found it necessary to have recourse to medical aid. It increased a morbid affection, which he had experienced for the last two or three months, a kind of habitual dull heaviness, which was more annoying, and excited more apprehension, from his having been absolutely free from common head-ache during all his previous life; a circumstance rather remarkable in one whose time had been so devoted to literary labour, and who, in other ways, very sensibly felt the effects of it on his bodily frame.

Not long after his return home, he received the unexpected intelligence of the decease of his valued friend, the Rev. Thomas Coles, after a very short illness. "The sad event," he says,\* "comes with such a surprise that one seems hardly able to believe it a reality. To think how I saw him, evening after evening, but a few short weeks since! betraying no signs of the infirmities of age; vigorous, animated, and in various activity; a man for whom one was pleased to predict a physical and mental competence for his work, for towards twenty years to come. How strange and striking if, the last morning of being with him, at his cheerful breakfast, some secret prophetic intimation had come into my mind, that by the time I am now writing he would be silent, insensible, and waiting but a few hours to be conveyed to the grave! What a change it would have brought in the silent consciousness of the mind, over every look, and sentence, and tone of his voice! . . . To-morrow the pulpit will be beheld with a kind of dubious wondering sentiment, that will say, 'Will he really be seen there no more? Have there proceeded thence his final address and final prayer? Will every voice now to be heard there be a memento that his, which has been heard these forty years,

\* To Dr. Stenson, September, 1840.

is now for ever silent, when there seemed every probability that it would continue to be heard, through many years to come, in which many of his hearers would be withdrawn from the congregation and from the living world, leaving him still in the exercise of his ministration?

" . . . . Mr. Coles was insinuating me a half request to be there [Bourton] at this very day, for the missionary meeting. What an astounding thing it would have been had there been an inspired seer to say, 'Mr. Coles, you will, at that time, be in an assembly *elsewhere*.' "

In the summer of 1841 Mr. Foster spent several weeks with Mr. (now Sir John) Easthope and his family; part of the time was passed in the Isle of Wight.

In a letter dated July 17, he says, referring to his journey from Southampton, "A gentleman on the railway mentioned some remarkable antiquities dug up in cutting the road, and gave directions for them to be shown to me, and where I should find them. They are various pieces of ancient *British pottery*, some of them of forms not exactly, that I remember, described by Sir R. Hoare. They are chiefly basins and urns, large and small: a large urn containing human bones and a skull. The shape of some of them may be called elegant. They were found not very deep in the earth, and where there was no sign (tumulus or the like) on the surface. I am always interested by these primitive, or call them primeval antiquities."

This was the last time that he visited London. He was there for many weeks in the spring and summer of 1836, at the house of the same friend; and after his return often spoke in grateful terms of the kindness which he met with from every member of the family. On both occasions he devoted much of his time to the various exhibitions and works of art in the British Museum and elsewhere. "I stayed," he says in one of his letters, "five or six hours

in the British Institution, wishing to have all the pleasure, and everything also that could be obtained by a very long and repeated look at the long array of fine things. . . . I suppose almost all fine; but there are some half dozen of the strongest captivation—one by Guercino,—one or two by Ruysdael,—one by Salvator,—one by Wilson. That by Guercino, a Magdalen, I could have looked at a whole hour. It is something much more, and of a higher character than merely beautiful. It is not exactly strictly its beauty that arrests and captivates. It has a refined grace, and what may almost be denominated sanctity. It is represented as totally abstracted, withdrawn from all around, and with a calm expression of sorrow. There is one unpleasant, almost *mischievous* effect, of seeing so many imposing or captivating ideal forms of humanity,—that it creates, or rather augments, a repulsion to human beings such as they are actually seen. To-day, for example, in seeing the numberless multitude, as they were passing backward and forward, or standing in ranks, one glanced at their countenances with a sort of recoil from each and almost all; not from the mere effect of their material cast, but also and very strongly from the apparent expression of character,—even of those who were evidently not of what we mean by the *vulgar*.

“In seeing such vast multitudes,\* one is often struck

\* “Another cause of the little regard felt by individuals for the mass of humanity in a great city is, that *number depreciates value*. Human beings are made too vulgar and plentiful to be any thing worth. You can find them in multitudes any time, any where,—are common as swarms of flies on a summer's day, and reduced to nearly the same insignificance, by the marvellous excess of their number (one is inclined to say *quantity*), and by the trivial importance which each is felt to bear to the whole; which whole, as I have said before, you can bring within no feeling of friendly approximation. The whole is a world, and an individual is but an atom; the one is too vast for your benevolent regard, the other too small.

“It would be curious to make a scale of degrees of importance which human beings may bear to each other, according to the degrees of the

with the thought how each one is all-important to *individual self*, and, in most instances, considerably so to some other individuals; and yet how totally insignificant to all besides,—whether, or how, they live or die. What a consideration it is, that since I came hither, as many at least as three thousand have died in this city—all unknown and indifferent to me.”

Near the end of December he was attacked with bronchitis, “a visitation” which, he remarked, “came as a very strange one to a man who had not for fifty years been confined to bed a single day.” He kept his room somewhere about two months. He manifested, throughout, the greatest patience; and his letters, written when he became convalescent, disclose how anxiously he sought to derive spiritual improvement from the affliction: “I hope,” he says,\* “this season of imprisonment has not been without a real advantage in respect to the highest concern. It has brought with it many grave, earnest, and painful reflections. The review of life has been solemnly condemnatory—such a sad deficiency of the *vitality* of religion, the devotional spirit, the love, the zeal, the fidelity of conscience. I have been really amazed to think how I could—I do not say, have been *content* with such a low and almost equivocal piety, for I never *have* been at all content—but, how I could have *endured* it, without my whole soul rising up against it, and calling vehemently on the Almighty Helper

facility of meeting with them. I would begin with Robinson Crusoe, to whom the appearance of a man was a circumstance of infinite interest; I would advance next to a thinly scattered population, like that of the back settlements of America, where the infrequent visit of a neighbour, who travels leagues for the interview, must be a welcome surprise; and so forward through the various stages of population till I come to London. What a difference between the feeling of the solitary islander at the sight of a human countenance, and that with which you meet or pass any one of the men or women in Fleet Street!”—*Mr. Foster to Miss M. Snooke, March 14, 1803.*

\* To the Rev. Josiah Hill, February, 1842.

to come to my rescue, and never ceasing till the blessed experience was attained. And then the sad burden of accumulated guilt;—and the solemn future!—and life so near the end!—O what dark despair but for that blessed light that shines from the Prince of Life, the only and the all-sufficient Deliverer from the second death. I have prayed earnestly for a genuine penitential living faith on Him. Do you pray for me. Thus I hope this temporary experience of suspended health will have a salutary effect on the *soul's* health. I do not mean that these exercises of mind are a new thing, brought on by this visitation. They have grown upon me in this late declining stage of life. But for every thing that enforces and augments them I have cause to be thankful. There is much work yet to be done in this most unworthy soul; my sole reliance is on Divine assistance; and I do hope and earnestly trust (trust in that assistance itself) that every day I may yet have to stay on earth, will be employed as part of a period of persevering, and I almost say *passionate*, petitions for the Divine Mercy in Christ, and so continue to the last day and hour of life, if consciousness be then granted. . . . Often I am making humbling comparisons between my lot, and that of the many ten thousands who are suffering at this time all the miseries of hopeless destitution. Why am I so favoured, and millions so wretched?" . . .

Mr. Foster went to Bourton, for the last time, in the middle of September, 1842. He stayed about six weeks, and returned, looking rather stouter and apparently somewhat invigorated. He seemed to have enjoyed his visit very much,—to have been gratified by the cordial hospitality and kindness of his relations and old acquaintance, and to have felt much interest in wandering about his old haunts. In writing while there to one of his nephews, he thus



advertises to the state of public affairs: "I suppose,"\* he says, "you have the pestilent Chartists in your part of the country. They are a very stupid and pernicious set; some of their leaders great rogues; the whole tribe a sad nuisance. They have done what they could to frustrate the exertions for obtaining the only public benefit which there is the smallest chance of getting at present, or for a long time to come; that is an alteration or abrogation of the *Corn Laws*, a thing which would immediately be a most important relief to that commercial interest on which so many tens of thousands are depending. And while they are doing this mischief they are brawling about *universal suffrage*, a thing as much out of reach, for a very long time to come, as any thing they could dream of. And yet, unless they can get this, they say, they will accept no other change for the amendment of their condition. What fools! And to judge of their recent proceedings they are *themselves* wholly unfit for such a suffrage. What a fine and valuable thing the suffrage would be to men whose chosen business it has been to go and disturb and break up with noise, and violence, and abuse, the important meetings for discussing the best expedients for alleviating the public distress!—No, no; they have yet a great deal to learn before they will be fit for a considerate and judicious voting for members of the legislature. I wish the people *had* the Universal Suffrage, provided they were better educated, more intelligent, more sober, more moral; but not in their present state of ignorance and rudeness. Their being so is, as to some of them, their own fault. But the main weight of the reproach falls on the Government and the Church, which have left the people in this deplorable state from generation to generation. There ought to have been, long since, a general *national education*, which would have made sure of *all* being

\* To Mr. John Foster, September 22, 1842.

educated, in some decent measure,—as is the case in Prussia, and some parts of Germany. But high statesmen and high churchmen have never, till a little lately, given themselves any concern about the matter. . . .

“A sojourn in this village brings back many remembrances. What a change of the inhabitants! All the *then* old people vanished, and those who were in the vigour of middle life now withering into age,—and myself as much so as any of them. If I observe some of them stooping as they walk, my attention instantly turns on myself, and I perceive that I do so too; especially since the long and weakening disorder, which last winter confined me many weeks to my chamber, and several weeks to my bed. Within and without are the admonitions that life is hastening to a close. I endeavour to feel and live in conformity to this admonition; greatly dissatisfied with myself and my past life, and having and seeking no ground of hope for hereafter but solely the all-sufficient merits and atonement of our Lord and Saviour. If that great cause of faith and hope were taken away I should have nothing left.”

In another letter, of rather later date, he refers again to the same topics. “It must have been a most harassing time for you all,” he says,\* “when you had those late tumults about you. The tumults and outrages will subside, from the conviction and experience that no good can come of them, but much evil, aggravating the evil there was already. But though the violence will be put down, the spirit, the resentment, and the sense of oppression and injustice, in the state of the people, must remain, and increase, till some great change shall come at length, but not soon. One is astonished at the stockish stupidity of those *Chartists*, if they really did and do dream of obtaining what they demand in their charter. It is impossible but

\* To Mr. John Foster, October 1, 1842.

some of the bad men who have been exciting them, and making their own base advantage of them, must know better. Till the times, the nation, and themselves, shall have vastly changed, they might as well think of going to the moon. They have greatly damaged the whole cause of reform, by setting the middle as well as the higher ranks more against them than they were before. Nothing could be more mad and mischievous than their proceedings respecting the great question of the corn laws. Besides the extravagance of some of their demands, their irreligious and profligate character has made them detested, and would make them feared if they had any real power. As to their power, do they not see how impotent they would be, whatever were their numbers, against a large disciplined *military force*, of which fifty thousand would soon be brought into action if there were any occasion for it? There is no chance for the '*popular rights*,' till the people become better educated and more morally respectable. And I fear their chance for better education is but small, since the aristocracy and the Church have very little disposition to promote that important object."

About Christmas, Mr. Foster had one or two attacks of spitting of blood, and again about the middle of January, 1843. These attacks did not confine him at all to his bed or to his room, but obliged him to be very careful, and to remain in the house for many weeks. As the milder weather came on, he ventured out again, and did not seem in a very perceptibly different state from what he had been in during the previous summer. He was somewhat thinner and more languid—less disposed and less able to move about. His cough also was often very troublesome.

He continued to manifest a deep interest in public affairs, especially the great question of National Education; so intense was his anxiety that some measure should

be taken to raise the mass of the people, that he would have acquiesced in a measure that would have substantially effected this object, even though accompanied with restrictions inconsistent with what he deemed a just and enlightened policy. "As to the *Education* project," he says,\* "the probability seems to be that it will wholly fall to the ground, so that our rising race of savages and pagans will continue to grow up in the hideous condition which has been so frightfully brought to view. For the almost universal remonstrance of the Nonconformists *must* have a great effect to deter the ministry from persisting in the bill as it stands; and there is small chance that the Church arrogance will permit any conciliatory modification. Horrid bad either way; on the one hand, indefinitely prolonged and increasing barbarism, and on the other, the hateful and intolerable domination of the Established Church. The Methodist folk are going too far, in declaring against the bill absolutely and altogether; whereas the case is so alarmingly urgent, that if such modifications as those proposed by Lord John Russell, or even the most material part of them, were admitted, one would, however reluctantly, and with a feeling of submitting to some injustice, make considerable concessions, in order that the wretched populace might have a certainty of *some* good in the way of cultivation, rather than be consigned, downright and hopelessly, to the great pestilent swamp of ignorance and barbarism. What a tale is told of our opulent and powerful Church and State by the present mental and moral condition of the million! What a fearful account elsewhere they—that is, the persons and classes of chief authority and ability—have gone to render! One sometimes feels the rising of an impatient indignation which is ready to transgress the great law of piety, by asking, in a temper

\* To the Rev. Josiah Hill, April 21, 1843.

which requires to be repressed, 'Why does the Supreme Governor permit such a course of things?'"

Mr. Foster regarded very favourably the Prussian system of education; and on its being represented to him by a friend that from the accounts of Mr. Laing and others, it appeared that the plan was open to grave objections—that the restrictions imposed by it on the individual will, checked the generous growth of the moral sentiments, and induced laxity in the domestic relations—he manifested surprise and disappointment.\*

The last time of his appearing on any public occasion was in June, 1843, at the annual meeting of the Bristol Baptist College, when he attended, as he had been wont for many preceding years, the theological examination. This proof of his undiminished attachment to the Institution was entirely spontaneous, for much as his presence on these occasions was valued, the failing state of his health quite forbade the expectation of being favoured with it. During the period of his final residence in the neighbourhood of Bristol, he had been a member of the committee, and had taken the most lively interest in its transactions; particularly on any important emergencies, as at the decease of the president Dr. Ryland, in 1825, when arrangements were made for a more efficient system of education, in order to meet the general progress of society and the exigencies of the denomination. In 1823, he wrote an address in behalf of the College, and furnished the most important paragraphs in the annual reports for 1826 and 1838.†

\* *Vide* Notes of a Traveller on the Social and Political State of France, Russia, Switzerland, Italy, and other parts of Europe, during the present century, by SAMUEL LAING, Esq., 2nd edit., 1842, ch. 6, 7, and 8.

† "We may presume that not many persons in our denomination to whom we might apply, would plainly say they do not wish the Institution to be supported and prosperous; that they do not care what its situation may be. . . . Nor will they say they are indifferent as to the intellectual qualifications of the men who are to be public instructors; that an illiterate

Towards September all the unfavourable symptoms became much aggravated. "The three years that I am in advance of you," he writes to Mr. Hill (Aug. 31), "have brought on me the most cogent mementos of mortality.

or slenderly cultivated preacher will do as well, provided he possess piety and zeal, as another, who shall combine with these essential qualifications, the advantage of a mind regularly disciplined to the exercise of thinking, and the acquirement of valuable knowledge. We sometimes hear them saying, with respect to one or other of the less cultivated preachers (whose labours, however, when their situation has denied them the time and means for adequately supplying the deficiency, we do not undervalue), 'What an excellent preacher he would have been, if he had enjoyed the advantage of a good education!' They profess to be sorry for the difference between what he is, and what he might have been; between the measure of good he is able to do now, and that which he might have effected if competently trained. And will they refuse the necessary means of obviating just that difference in the case of young men of piety and promising ability, willing to devote themselves to the service?

"While solicitous to have their children well educated, they would deem it absolutely a calamity that their families should grow up in attendance on a ministry unqualified to convey religious instruction in a manner that should command respect; unadapted to enlighten, convince, and persuade. How would they like to have the task, after each service, of pleading, to the sharper of their young people (whose first essays of criticism are sure to have the preacher for the subject) for candour to his literary and mental deficiencies; of excusing the inaccuracies of his language, helping out the lameness of his argument, and urging (alas! vainly urging) that religion is not the less true and important for the incompetence of its advocate? And surely they would wish that families everywhere should be saved from an evil which they would so deprecate for their own.

"But the pleading is not the less valid, if we turn from this supposed order of hearers to the very uncultivated portion which must make a large part of most of our congregations; and which it is in the highest degree desirable to draw thither in increasing numbers. *No mistake is more gross than that of imagining that undisciplined teachers are the fittest to deal with ignorance and mental rudeness.* On the contrary, to force the rays of thought intelligibly through so opaque a medium, demands peculiarly and emphatically a great clearness and prominence of thinking, and an exact feeling of the effect of words, as to be chosen, combined, and varied.

"The character of the age we live in is a frequent topic of our discourse. We are all saying, What a wonderful movement in the general mind; what an awakened start from the monotony of our forefathers' life; what an amazing development of the powers of science to wield the powers of nature; what an impetus and acceleration of human action; what a creation of means for the diffusion of knowledge; what signs, surely, of some grand approaching change! We look on this great improvement and exclaim, taking credit for pious zeal while we are exclaiming, 'O that the cause of Religion were, through every section of it, in equally energetic

Within less than two years, two protracted seasons of very great prostration, resulting in a settled debility which will continue through whatever remains of life. I have the great grievance of a cough, of an anomalous kind, having apparently nothing to do with the chest, but caused by a local irritation somewhere at the bottom of the throat. No medicaments take any effect on it. Of a dozen things tried, *laudanum* is the only one to which it yields. An unwelcome resource, which I use as sparingly as I can; for I feel it has an unpleasant effect on the head." . . . .

In his last letter to the same friend, of rather later date (Sept. 18), he says, "This is a grand missionary week in our town; of which I shall not see a particle, or hear a sentence. I shall not be called on by any of them; it being understood that I cannot *work a conversation*,\* talking

forward impulse in our land!" But there should be some voice at hand, to name to us a certain article, which is supplied in immense profusion to empower those other mighty agencies; and but for which the bold experiments, the engines, the railroads, the improved processes, the compelling of rude substances to valuable uses, the printing presses, the myriads of labourers, would be all at a stand.

"To this suggestion will the man who was professing his desire for the accelerated progress of the Christian agency reply, that those other enterprises have the captivating recommendation, that the expenditure of money is expected to *return* in money to the expenders; whereas, in a case like ours, unfortunately, the expenditure would give no return other than that of sometime, in some degree, making some men wiser, better, and happier? Is it an insignificant promise, 'Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just?'"—*Report*, 1838.

\* "*Work a conversation.*" This expression may be illustrated by an extract from a letter to Mr. Hill, written about 1819—"You mentioned some expectation of seeing B—— in Wales. Now in good truth, my dear sir, if I knew at *what time*, I would make some arrangement or other that should authorise me to say, that I could not possibly visit you at *that time*. In my present state of debility I feel an absolute horror of the necessity of long laborious *talks*, such as would be inevitable in a constant association with a man like him—a thorough College man, hard disciplined, doggedly literary, and nearly a stranger. One day of it (I know by experience) would do me more mischief than a week's idleness would undo. With *you* the case is quite different;—we are old acquaintances,—there is no obligation of ceremony,—we can talk just about what we like,—read Walter Scott,—be under no necessity of mental exertion, but just as far

being sure to irritate a very injurious cough. On this account, last evening I sent away without seeing him the person whom, at all times, I am more pleased to see than any one else from the town. I fancy some little abatement of the extreme debility. Any material amendment will be slow; as to *recovery*, in any moderate or ordinary sense of the word, I never think of it. It may be that life may last on two or three lingering years; as the constitution, radically, is of the sounder order, and *very* sound till within the last two years. But my business is to be looking habitually to the *end*, and making all serious preparation for it, under such constant strong admonition. In considering, a day or two since, the balance of good and evil of this last year and more, I hoped I could say, I *am a gainer*, by the salutary effects I hope I have reaped from this discipline. I never prayed more earnestly, nor probably with such faithful frequency. '*Pray without ceasing*,' has been the sentence repeating itself in the silent thought; and I am sure, I think, that it will, that it *must*, be my practice to the last conscious hour of life. Oh why not throughout that long, indolent, inanimate, half-century past! I often think mournfully at the difference it would have made now, when there remains so little time for a more genuine, effective, spiritual life. What would become of a poor sinful soul, but for that blessed, all-comprehensive Sacrifice, and that intercession at the right hand of the Majesty on high?"

On the 24th of September he took to his room, which he

as we find it agreeable,—debate with the young ones,—ramble hither and thither (that is, when you are not engaged),—in short, be always at our ease; anything more formal, more laborious, and more continued than this, miserably jades me. It would be as bad as having to preach every day. I admire B——'s intelligence and attainments, but his being such, *unless he were an old familiar*, would render prolonged conversation with him a kind of *college exercise*, of which, to repeat the word, my state of health gives me the utmost horror."



never again left. There exists no doubt that his lungs had been diseased for many years. With very rare and slight exceptions, he betrayed none of the irritability so generally attendant upon the disease. The religious remarks and admonitions addressed to those around him were deeply interesting and affecting; but it was not often that his cough and *extreme* weakness allowed him to say much. On one occasion, however he spoke at great length on "the duty of earnest, persevering, importunate prayer;" and at another time, on the absolute necessity of casting ourselves on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, concluding in the following words, "We can do nothing in our own strength; we must look to Jesus—our only Mediator—our only Redeemer—our only hope." But no exhortations could have been half so impressive as the uniform patience he displayed, and the self-condemnatory remarks he often made, indicating a profound feeling of the evil of sin.

One evening when he appeared very much exhausted, it was remarked, "You are very languid to-night." "Yes," he replied, "I shall languish out of this mortal life sometime not long hence." On being told of the frequent kind inquiries made for him by friends in the neighbourhood, he said, "To all inquiries it's always the same answer, and the last will be the best of all." On the sabbath previous to his death, while a friend was reading to him one of Doddridge's Sermons, he fell asleep; on awaking he said, in a tone very expressive of a grateful feeling, "'Tis a thankless office to read to sleepy people."

In the earlier stages of his illness he was very much in the habit of speaking of the value of time, and sometimes quoted Young's lines on the subject. Another frequent topic of conversation was the separate state. After the death of any friend, he seemed impatient to be made ac-

quainted with the secrets of the invisible world.\* On one occasion of this kind (rather more than a twelvemonth before his own decease) he exclaimed, "They don't come back to tell us!" and then, after a short silence, emphatically striking his hand upon the table, he added, with a look of intense seriousness, "But we shall know *some time!*"

He sat up for a few hours almost daily till the day before his death. Towards the latter part of the time he often expressed a wish to be left alone for a little while, saying, that there was much he ought to think of, and that in a state of great debility it was a difficult thing to think.

During the whole course of his illness he showed the greatest consideration for the servants and all about him, and was anxious to give them as little trouble as possible. He never allowed any one to sit up, even for part of the night—he would not listen to such a proposal, and when urged would say, that it would so annoy him as to prevent his sleeping.

Speaking of his weakness to one of his two servants, who had both lived with him for about thirty years, he mentioned some things which he had not strength to perform; and then added, "But I can pray, and that is a glorious thing." On another occasion he said to his attendant,

\* "The nearer I approach by advancing age to the grand experiment, the more inquisitive—I might almost say, restlessly inquisitive,—I become respecting that other scene and state of our existence. . . . The wonder is, after all, and the self-reproach too, there should be a difficulty to keep the mind in a habit of earnest *preparation* for making, as our friend expressed it, 'the grand and final journey.' . . . Still another surprise (but truly the uncertainty of life, under almost any circumstances, *should* not surprise us) was caused me by the information of the decease of Mr. G.'s daughter; no other, I believe, than the pleasing young lady who took my arm in walking to the music-meeting at the cathedral. How little did I think of her, in that blooming youth as bearing the fatal mark of an appointment to be so prematurely withdrawn from life. If that had been a *visible* mark, what an emotion would have been excited in looking at my companion!"—*Mr. Foster to Mrs. Stokes, June 14, 1839.*

“Trust in Christ—trust in Christ.” At another time, the servant heard him repeating to himself the words, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

On October 3rd he wrote to Sir J. Easthope, and stated that he had no expectation of surviving more than a very few months, but though he felt unequal to the exertion of a personal interview, he “would not yet say Farewell.” Two days later, however, his debility had increased so rapidly, that he limited his expectations of prolonged life to only a few days, and ended his last letter to the same friend with the words, “I commend you to the God of mercy, and very affectionately bid you—*Farewell*.”

His family were much struck by the perfect dignity and composure with which, as soon as he relinquished all hope of even a partial recovery, he resigned himself to the divine appointment.

On Saturday, October 14th, the day before his death, he complained of feeling some confusedness in his head, and was much oppressed in his breathing; he was therefore obliged to desist that day from his usual practice of hearing some one read to him;\* and finding it very difficult to converse, he requested to be left quite alone during the afternoon and evening. This desire was complied with; some of his family going occasionally into his room, but so as not to disturb him, till the usual hour of retiring to rest; they then particularly requested that some one might be allowed to sit up with him through the night. This, however, he steadily

\* One of the last works read to him was a sermon by Dr. Doddridge on “the incapacity of an unregenerate soul for relishing the enjoyments of the heavenly world.” He was so much struck with this sermon that he desired his daughters to promise him they would read it every month, saying that he thought no one could read it often without a salutary effect. During the last two or three days of his life, the Scriptures (chiefly the Psalms) were by his own desire exclusively read to him.

refused, though in consequence of a long-continued fit of coughing he was in a state of greater exhaustion than usual. The kind old servant who attended upon him, from an apprehension lest she should disturb him, did not go at all into his room in the course of that night, as she had been in the habit of doing every night for the past fortnight. But towards four o'clock she went to the door of his room to listen, and being satisfied from the sound she heard that he was sleeping, returned without going in. At about six o'clock she went again to the door, and this time hearing no sound she went in, and found that he had expired. His arms were gently extended, and his countenance was as tranquil as that of a person in a peaceful sleep. Death had taken place but a very short time, for only the forehead was cold.\*

\* A volume of Sermons and Sacramental Addresses, by a venerable minister of the United Presbyterian Church, the Rev. James Hay, D.D., has recently (1851) been published, with a Memoir of the Author by Dr. Mackelvie, in which the following gratifying reference is made to the present work.

"During his last illness Dr. Hay frequently referred to 'Foster's Correspondence,' expressing his liveliest gratitude to God for directing his attention to such a work as a fit preparation for his dying bed, and making special mention of passages in it from which he thought he had derived edification and comfort. It is surprising that he should have become so deeply interested in and impressed by the work referred to, for never were two men so diverse in every respect, piety excepted, as John Foster and Dr. Hay. The one was continually looking at the sombre, the other at the bright side of things; the one was pensive, the other cheerful; the one contemplative, the other active; the one retiring, the other bustling; the one speculative, the other practical. . . . But Dr. Hay found in the letters of John Foster a freshness of thought, vigour of intellect, independence of judgment, and earnestness of manner, which accorded with the youthful energy of mind he retained to the last, and made him feel as if he had met with something new in literature. Besides, the frequent allusions in those letters to the unseen world, and the departed relatives who people it, stirred the under current of Dr. Hay's feelings, which other authors seldom reached, and filled his mind with images of objects exquisitely lovely and peculiarly dear to him. How often does the ocean seem smooth on its surface, while there is a ground-swell that is agitating all beneath; and so it is with a heart that has known much sorrow; its sadness continues long, long after the exciting cause has died away, and when the countenance seems to be wearing a perpetual smile. The state

On the following Saturday his remains were laid in the grave, which just seventeen years before had been opened to receive those of his son, in the burial-ground belonging to the chapel at Downend, where he formerly preached.

of Dr. Hay's mind was the type of our remark, and his general deportment the embodiment of our figure. But an additional cause of his deep interest in this book was the fact that the death-bed scene of John Foster given in it, was the last he ever contemplated, was one he greatly admired, and one which as far as possible he sought to realize in his own. In short, that interest was a practical commentary which he was affording without intending it, on the text, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.'—*Memoir*, p. 100.

His biographer quotes the following entry in Dr. Hay's diary:—

"February, 1848. We have gone through Macauley's two volumes of the History of England,—a work which discovers great talent and research. We read it with breathless anxiety, but felt more satisfaction from the perusal of Noel's book on the Separation of Church and State. . . . Much, however, as we enjoyed Macauley and Noel, the interest created by each and both fell greatly short, to me at least, of that excited by the 'Life and Correspondence of John Foster.' That was a man of a bold, powerful, and daring mind,—sometimes too daring, for he occasionally wandered from the truth in his gropings after it. Still he kept in the path that leads to glory; and no doubt, has found, and is now enjoying it. I always admired him, but never so much as after I had read his letters, and came to know his experiences. I am content with one reading of Macauley and Noel, but I shall turn again and again to Foster. His letters to the Rev. Josiah Hill afforded me high though melancholy satisfaction. What a touching scene he opens up in one of them, where he refers to the death of his son! and how solemn the question he puts in connection with it! . . . O how fully my mind and heart respond to these sentiments and feelings. The reading of them touches a chord in my soul which I thought had ceased to vibrate, and seems to recall a solemn dirge in which I had often taken part."—Pp. 97—99.

It will enable the reader to enter more fully into the force of Dr. Hay's last observation, to be informed that he lived to the age of fourscore, and of his eleven children survived all save one.

## LETTERS.

## CCIII. TO MRS. STOKES.

[On the Death of Mr. Stokes.]

*Stapleton, Feb. 20, 1839.*

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—For how truly I may name you so, when I am looking back over a period of nearly thirty years, that have passed away since I was first received in your house, with all the kindness of yourself and of him who was then your companion there; and during which there has been a succession of times and scenes which we have all three happily enjoyed together.

Within the last two months, one of these, and then another, and another, has been brought back in lively images to my memory, with an interest in which a painful sentiment has deeply mingled with that of pleasure. Pleasing events and experiences which are long past and gone, bring a pensiveness in the reflection itself that they *are* past and irrevocable. This, feeling, however, can be somewhat relieved so long as there remain the possibility and the means of renewing the pleasure, and being happy again in the same manner from the same causes. But when the final withdrawment of one indispensable participator of those pleasures has taken away that possibility, the remembrance of them is accompanied by a very mournful sentiment. It is with a melancholy emotion that we say, "With *him* I can behold those scenes, converse on those subjects, share the social animation—no more." Often I have in imagination placed myself in some delightful spot or stage in North Wales, and thought how I should feel if I were to be there again; what a strong and mournful admonition there would be of the absence of our friend; how memory would interfere to preclude the pleasure; how every object adapted in itself to inspire delight, would remind me of something that was fatally wanting. And in the more quiet situations, in the domestic intercourse or the social party, the silent thought

(while every friend was contributing to the pleasure), the thought would be, "Where is *his* intelligent and friendly countenance and animated voice?"

You will often have felt a momentary prompting to look at a part of the room, or at a chair, where he used more commonly to sit; to see the door opening into your apartment with a feeling as if it should be *he* that is coming in: to look at and handle some article of his apparel, or some implement of his familiar use, or some favourite book, with a sentiment that almost says, "Is it absolutely true that he has used this for the last time?"

Among the feelings caused by the loss of domestic friends, few things have in my own case been more striking than the impression of their absolute and *entire surrender* of the things that specially and individually belonged to them. This or that was his or hers,—peculiarly and personally so; perhaps a favourite article; but they make no claim to it now; it is totally yielded up; let go, absolutely and for ever; it is now a thing infinitely indifferent to the person who called it "mine;" it may be taken by any person, or for any use. The late proprietor wants it no longer, knows it no more.

No doubt the real principle of the pensive emotion excited by this surrender and relinquishment is, that it tells us, in this secondary manner of evidence, that he has also quitted us; has withdrawn his claims upon us, and has ceased to interfere with our concerns and proceedings.

Yet it will often occur as an idea nowise irrational or improbable, that perhaps the loved and departed friend, in what is, as to our perceptions, an absence entire and absolute, may not really have become a stranger. I have often thought it highly probable that the departed friends who took a warm and faithful interest in our welfare may do so still. A benevolent remembrance of us they *necessarily* have. But why not much more than that? Why should it appear improbable that they have the means of being apprised of our situation and conduct, and even our feelings; and that they maintain, in a continuance, a friendly interest for us; watching, as it were, our progress toward the appointed moment of our passing after them through death? Some good and wise men have even main-

tained it as not improbable that they may be employed in kind offices for their pious survivors, in humble co-operation with angelic agents. We cannot know it; but we may be allowed to indulge a pleasing and consolatory idea which contradicts no principle of reason, and no doctrine of revelation. At the very least we may feel confidently assured that they retain us so much in mind as to feel a lively interest in our final welfare, and in the anticipation of our transition to their society. The day of resurrection is to be looked forward to as the consummation of the felicity of the followers of Christ. But that event must certainly be far distant; and I sometimes wonder that religious teachers advert so little, in any distinct terms, to the state immediately after death; which inspiration has so expressly asserted to be a state of consciousness, and of happiness to faithful souls.

It is true (and it appears to me one of the most mysterious things in the economy of the divine government), that the information afforded us by revelation on this subject is extremely limited. But, assume only that the state of good men immediately after death is a state of consciousness, of deliverance from all the ills of mortality, and above all from *sin*, and then what a grand series of felicities they have in prospect *before* the resurrection which is yet at the distance of many ages, possibly of thousands of years. Their close vicinity to that state, on which they are to enter after a few years at all events, and many of them in much shorter time, may well bring the subject and the anticipation to press with a more *immediate* interest than even the resurrection itself. How short a time comparatively, at the most, you will have to wait for the call to rejoin the friend who is gone before you. How near, how very near, *he* was to the other world and the other life, when he wrote his last letter to me, in which he made so striking a reference to the "grand and final journey,"\*—being then not more, I think, than about

\* "But should these pleasing anticipations be suspended, by any one or more of us being called away on *that grand and final journey* from the world, for which we were all sent into it, may that event prove to those who depart, rather a glorious compensation for, than disappointment of, whatever pleasures we had been promising ourselves here, and an efficient



*eight weeks*—eight little weeks! from his departure to the other world. Oh what an emphasis of interest if he could have known how near he was! But he needed not this knowledge as a *warning*; he had taken the solemn warning long, long before; and sought to be in a habitual preparation. Let us, unknowing where in the dark distance before us is the appointed hour, let us earnestly do the same.

You, my dear friend, do not need to be instructed in the topics which are available for both consolation and admonition. Your own thoughts remind you that, estimable as was the friend who had been called away, and deserving of a warm affection while present, and still when now absent, there is yet one being, the Supreme Friend, who claims a still more devoted affection, and that the affection due to him, infinitely due, includes submission, acquiescence, resignation; and even an *approbation* of his proceedings. You know that he can, by an increased sense of his favour, make a compensation for what he takes away, and that his throne of mercy is constantly accessible to the petitioner for that blessing; and that there is an all-powerful Intercessor there. You are reminded that a Christian is not "to sorrow as those that have no hope." You are aware that life, while continued to you, has still its duties, which are incompatible with a yielding up of the mind to be "swallowed up of overmuch sorrow." Affection for the friend who has been withdrawn from you, in order to be what it should be, will include a grateful pleasure in thinking what he has gained by the removal. You have to consider also through what a very long period you *have* possessed, what is now, wisely and for the best beyond all doubt, withdrawn from you. Gratitude for that should not be lost in present sorrow. True, indeed, the having *lost* a blessing long enjoyed might be lamented with bitterness almost unmingled, if there were nothing in prospect, if the loss were total and final. But how different is your anticipation of hereafter; and this difference should have its effect, it *claims* to have its effect,—in counteracting

incitement to those left behind more diligently and ardently to seek and insure their interest in the solid and permanent enjoyment of those sublime scenes and that exalted companionship."—*Mr. Stokes to Mr. Foster.*

the sorrow. *Time* also, though you may as yet hardly be able to believe it, *will* by degrees have a softening influence. And meanwhile, it is highly desirable that you should have the resolution to resume somewhat of the *activities* of life, and of the former social habits, as far as the circumstances of your situation may admit, or may supply occasions.

. . . . You will well believe that I set a very special value on the *box*, which you so kindly gave me as a token for the remembrance of our departed friend. How often and how many years it has served as a kind of medium of pleasant communication between us!

The flowers will soon appear in your garden. I fear they will not appear quite so beautiful and cheerful as they were wont to do. But still I hope the reviving spring will not have lost all its attractions. A poet has said mournfully, that no spring returns to *man*. But this is not true of pious men. The case is only, that it is a spring season *long deferred*. But it is in reserve, and will come at last.

CCIV. TO THE REV. B. ELTON, D.D., OF BROWN  
UNIVERSITY, RHODE ISLAND, U. S.

March 24, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR.—“The Great Western” is expected to be soon in here, shortly to be off again toward your side of the Atlantic; and I am unwilling that its vast lading of letters (hundreds of thousands I am told) should not include a few lines to Rhode Island, the first I think I have ever written to America.

I have to thank you for a recent note, accompanying a volume of the “Collections,” and also for a favour of long previous note, the packet which conveyed a friendly letter from you with several pamphlets, and the very remarkable poem “What Cheer.”\*

. . . . That “What Cheer” is truly, as I have already described it, a very remarkable performance, in every sense; the wild and gloomy scene; the strange adventures; the

\* *Vide* Letter cc. to Rev. Dr. Price, p. 156.

singular character of Williams; the eminent fact of his being the first protester for absolute religious liberty; and the great poetic power with which the whole is displayed; power in all ways, of giving a distinct visible reality to every scene, object, and transaction; of inventing striking incidents; of discriminating characters; of carrying a pervading intellectual tone of interesting sentiment and reflection through what is in substance so wild, stern, and rugged; and of clear, succinct narrative; *really* rapid, while *apparently* "progressing" with a quiet, unagitated movement.

I do not know whether the Eclectic Review (recently taken up in a new series, with much improved execution), finds its way to Rhode Island. Some months back it had rather a long article on the "What Cheer," much in the form of an analysis of the story, adapted to exhibit the work as of extraordinary interest, with the material defect (acknowledged by the writer), of not giving a due share of specimens. It would, however, I think rather please the poet than otherwise, if he happened to see it. Can this be the *only* production of a man of such conspicuous talent? It *should* not be so. At the same time, I dare say he feels that he would look around in vain for another subject so striking, so new, so capable of being displayed in strange, vivid, and imposing imagery. It is well, at all events, that such distinguished ability is in exercise for public service, in a judicial capacity when not in a literary one.

Here we have, as you observe, suffered a serious and irreparable withdrawal of mental ability from public usefulness, since you were here. There needs no mention of Hall; but in a different and much less conspicuous way, Anderson was a man of very great value, of strong mind, ample and various attainments, and intent on rendering them useful in his position as a tutor. The regret for his loss had the aggravation that he was as to age in what might be regarded as the prime of life and mental power, not having attained his fiftieth year. His successor is a very worthy young man from the University of Cambridge.

I am glad you can speak so favourably of the progress

and prospects of your Institution. It is gratifying to think of the great *number* of your American seminaries, and of there being in your vast community so prevalent a desire for instruction of all kinds, but especially of *religious* instruction, as to absorb, so to speak, the living knowledge, and all the Christian teachers continually sent out from so many schools. I believe there is not in your general population anything near such dreadful proportion of ignorance, as, to the disgrace, the infamy of all the "Church and State" authorities from age to age, and of the whole aristocracy, has been suffered to continue in this country, down to this hour. And *at this hour* there is no hopeful prospect of *any* great *national* measure to remove or mitigate the curse and plague. Our present liberal government (*nominally* the government) are powerless to accomplish any grand scheme of national improvement, however well disposed. We are, spite of Reform Bills and all that, under a decided and undisguised domination of the aristocracy; and they, the great majority of the church included, have no desire but the contrary, for the mental cultivation of the popular mass, by education in any fair sense of that word.

It is now many years since, that, in a piece named an Essay on the Evils of Popular Ignorance, I attempted a brief exposure of the wretched condition of the people in this respect, and of its mischiefs and calamities. Though it has never excited much attention, there is now printing here in Bristol a new edition to be sold very cheap, which I have very carefully revised, making very many verbal, and a few, very few, more material corrections; so that I should not in any event correct it any more. I ought to be something better than *pleased—thankful*—for any good that I hear of as effected by the Introduction to Doddridge.

. . . . As to *national* affairs we continue, and are likely to continue, in the same wretched plight. Each year, and each parliamentary session, our boasted Reform Bill has sunk lower and lower in worthlessness.

Yours, my dear Sir,

With great respect,

J. FOSTER.

CCV. TO THE REV. F. CLOWES.

[On the Intermediate State.]

June 23, 1839.

Allow me to apologize for not having long since acknowledged your letter, and attempted something in the way of answer. But truly I have much more need to ask for, than competence to offer, anything to be called opinions on the interesting subject of which you write.

It would seem that the generality of our fellow Christians are content to *have* no such opinions. Reposing on an indistinct idea, or an idea formed on common figures and analogies, of heaven, and going to heaven, they are exempt from any restless curiosity about an intermediate state. This does appear somewhat strange, when it is considered how very distinct a state there must be from that which is to follow the resurrection and the final judgment; when it is considered too, that while the latter is at a vast distance, (as *we* measure time), a few years at the most, possibly, as to some of us, but a few months, or even days, lie between us and the next stage of our existence. What we shall behold, and shall be, *so very soon*, is surely a matter of mighty interest.

From the consideration of its close approach, almost, if I may so express it, to *contact* with so advanced an age as mine, it has often an ascendancy in my thoughts over the ultimate state beheld in such remoteness of prospect.

I assume with entire confidence the soul's consciousness after death; this is *implied* in many passages of Scripture; but a number of them (often cited) assert it in so plain a manner, that nothing but the most resolute perversity of criticism can attempt to invalidate them.

But it often appears to me one of the dark things in the divine government that revelation, considered as intended to *impress and influence* our minds, as well as to inform them, in regard to our concern with hereafter, should have limited the communication to so very narrow an extent beyond the mere fact. It is true, that solemn *mystery* has an imposing effect on minds habitually contemplative, or occasionally excited to earnest thought. But still, what is so

*very* mysterious, so much of the element of darkness, as not even to shadow out any defined images, frustrating the attempt to descry or shape them, is apt to make but a transitory impression—an impression much depending on the *mood* of the mind, since there are no distinct forms to become fixed and abiding in the understanding.

It is probable that some circumstances of the invisible economy may be of such a nature, so little in analogy with anything within our present experience or knowledge, that they could not be conveyed intelligibly in the language of this world. But there might be presented plainly to our understanding, through that medium, by a messenger from the other world, many things on which a thoughtful spirit would, if permitted, solicit a communication from such a messenger. If we might be allowed to imagine such an exception to a general law, as a brief visit from a departed friend, with permission of making to us some disclosures of the unseen economy, an earnest inquisitiveness, heretofore indulged in vain, might prompt such inquiries as the following:—

*Where* is it—in what realm of the creation,—and have you an abode fixed to one locality? Do you exist as an absolutely unembodied spirit; or have you some material vehicle, and if so, of what nature? In what manner was it at your entrance *verified* to you that you were in another world, and with what emotion? Was an angel the conductor? How does the strange phenomenon, *Death*, appear to you, now that you *look back* upon it? What thought or feeling have you respecting your deserted body? What is your mode of perceiving external existence, and to what extent does that perception reach? Do you retain a vivid and comprehensive remembrance of the world and the life which you have quitted? Are you associated with the friends who preceded you in death? What is the manner of intercommunication? What are specifically your employments? What account do you take of *time*? What new manner of manifestation of the Divine Presence? Is there a *personal* manifestation of Jesus Christ? Have you a sense, a faculty, to perceive angels, as personal objects, analogously to what we should here call a visible appearance? Are you admitted to any personal knowledge of the

wise and good of ancient times? Is there an assignment into *classes*? Do the newly arrived acquire immediately an adaptation to the amazing change? Do you still take a peculiar interest for those who were dear to you, whom you have left behind? Have you any intimation how long it will be before they follow? Are you apprised continuously of much, or of anything, that is taking place on earth; it so, by what means, and with what feelings? Have you any appointed intervention in the affairs of this world? Is the awful mystery of the Divine Government of this world in any degree cleared up to your view? Is the great intellectual superiority which some have possessed on earth maintained in the other world? Is there a continual progress in knowledge; if so, must not those who have been in the spiritual world centuries, or thousands of years, be so immensely in advance of those recently entering, as to be almost humiliating to the latter? In what manner is the *retributive* destination signified?—is it by any formal judicial act, or only by a deep internal consciousness? Is the separation so wide between the good and evil that no distinct information of the condition of the one is conveyed to the other; or are they so mutually apprised as our Lord's parable of Dives and Lazarus would seem to intimate? How is maintained your complacency in the appointment to wait an indefinite, but certainly very, very long period, before the attainment of complete and ultimate happiness?

Such inquiries (thus noted without sequence or order) will sometimes be started in meditative thought; and most of them could be intelligibly answered by the supposed visitant, bringing the experience of the other world. That which would be the intelligible answer, that is, the statement of the truth, the fact, *might* have been, on the most important of them, communicated by Revelation. And *a priori*, it might have been conceived that such knowledge, in a certain selection and measure, would be a highly proper and almost necessary part of a revelation to beings so profoundly interested in the subject, and at the same time needing the utmost force of impression to secure their due attention to it.

Why then, did Revelation, while answering 'in the affirmative the question,—Is there a conscious state after

Death? withhold an answer to these inquiries, which would solicit some knowledge of *the manner and circumstances of it?*

Necessarily we are convinced that this silence is *for the best*; but perhaps not in the sense which the words would at first view seem to import; namely, that the withholding of the information is more conducive to our spiritual interest than the communication of it would have been. For the best, it *must* be in the sense that it is in conformity with the laws by which infinite wisdom and justice govern the world. But as a depraved race, we are placed under a *punitive* dispensation; a part of which is, that many things which would be for our good, even our spiritual good, are withheld.

*Divine grace itself*, the supreme good, the *sine quâ non*, to man, of happy existence here and hereafter, while not conferred at all on the vast majority, why so *partially* conferred on those who do receive a measure of it? As an ampler communication of it would be unspeakably beneficial, the restriction must be because a sinful race are doomed *not* to receive what would be most for their good. It may be by the same rule that we are denied such a knowledge of the invisible world as would have tended to make the prospect of that world more influentially impressive. And it is difficult to avoid thinking that a few of the special facts of that world, revealed discernibly through the solemn mystery, *so* discernibly as to bear an evident character of reality, though not presented with an unshaded palpable prominent distinctness, detached wholly from the mystery of the scene,—might and would contribute to keep our minds directed, and under a graver impression, to that region which it infinitely imports us to be preparing to enter. That such a disclosure is not made, may therefore be deemed to be a part of the punitive economy.

It is not forgotten that our Lord has said, "Neither would they believe though one rose from the dead." But it does not seem necessary to understand this declaration as regarding more than a strong conviction of the general fact of a future state of retribution; the evidence for which is assumed to be so sufficient that the rejection of it betrays a state of mind on which any corroborative evidence would equally be lost.



It would not be a fair inference from this, that to minds fully convinced of that great truth, and thoughtful concerning it, some more special information would be useless. Even as to the case put by our Lord, it is not said that a visit of one from the dead would not be a corroborative, and might not be a valuable, circumstance of evidence, but that it would be, with all the other evidence, *unavailing to minds of such infidel hardness.*

But, that mysterious hereafter!—We must submit to feel that we *are* in the dark; and have to walk by faith in the mere general fact, of a conscious and retributive state immediately after death; revealed without definitions, illustrations, and expansion into a field of varieties and specific forms. Still, a contemplative spirit hovers, with insuppressible inquisitiveness, about the dark frontier, beyond which it *knows* that wonderful realities are existing, realities of greater importance to it than the whole world on this side of that limit. We watch for some glimmer through any part of the solemn shade; but still are left to the faint, dubious resources of analogy, imagination, conjecture; and are never satisfied with any attempt at a defined conception, shaped by other minds or our own. If it be a conception indistinct and variable, and, so to speak, merely elemental, it does not take strong hold of the imagination; if it be reduced to a decided and specific delineation, it comes almost inevitably into so near an analogy to our terrestrial condition, that the mind recoils from it, both as being of too familiar and homely an aspect, and as being essentially improbable when we reflect what a mighty difference there *must* be, in the mode and perhaps the scene of existence, between the present state and that of a disembodied spirit. How changed must be the nature of our relations when we have passed away from under all known laws of the material world, and are received into the spiritual system. The mind has not, therefore, the power to *accept* a scheme which would figure its new mode of existence in close analogy to the present.—This is felt in reading Mr. Sheppard's very ingenious, and in many parts beautiful, ideal creation in his "AUTUMN DREAM."\*

\* AN AUTUMN DREAM: Thoughts in Verse, on the Intermediate State of Happy Spirits, &c., with a Dissertation concerning the mind of the lower

It is an imagery very pleasing to look upon; but there is still a sentiment which prompts to say, No; it is too much like this terrestrial place and state where we are; it is a poetical *refinement* rather than an *essential change*; my mind *cannot* yield itself; though unable to dream a fairer vision. Indeed it cannot dream a vision to which it would or could yield itself content that such should be the reality—of which it would complacently say, "Let it be so."

We wish to take what advantage we can of the few intimations afforded by Revelation. "Paradise;" "Abraham's bosom;" being "with Christ;" "present with the Lord."

I suppose there is an agreement of learned men that among the ancient Jews, and subsequently the early Christians, the term Paradise designated the happy part of the invisible world—the *Hades*, to which departing spirits are conveyed,—and that it must have been employed by our Lord and St. Paul in that sense.

It must be a *place*; the existing spirit exists *somewhere*; but whether within even our mundane (solar) system, there can be no surmise, but this—that it would hardly seem probable the spirit should be removed indefinitely far from the world to which it has belonged but a moment before, and which is the old place of sojourn of the order of beings to which it is still inseparably related. And yet what world in our system, under the same physical laws, by the testimony of science as our own, can be conceived to have any peculiar fitness for the receptacle and abode of *spirits*? One ingenious speculator will have the appointed place to be the sun. In the indulgence of imagination one would, certainly, have less *objection* to that sublime luminary than to any of his inferiors. But how arbitrary must be any such conjecture; and what should be the *peculiar fitness*?

The transfer of the attractive denomination, Paradise, seems to affirm such an analogy as will authorize our assurance that it is as delightful to the dwellers there as the terrestrial Paradise was to man in innocence. And animals. By JOHN SHEPPARD, author of *Thoughts on Devotion*, 2nd ed. 1841.

the region and the inhabitants must have as direct an adaptation to each other as the garden of Eden had to the *compound* constitution of man, soul and *body*. But what a strangely different *mode* of adaptation! For how can the properties and phenomena of *place* be adapted to disembodied spirits? If we suppose the place to be rich in the characters of sublimity and beauty, and all other physical qualities displayed in *material* elements and aspects, such as could be taken cognizance of by means of organs of sense like ours, how can they be apprehended by spirits divested of them? And yet we cannot think, either that a place presented to us under the name and image of Paradise can be without some such fair attributes, or that they can be lost on the perceptions of disembodied spirits happily located there. We cannot conceive of it as merely a place to *contain them in*, while they are indifferent to its material glories.

There arises a suggestion whether, in order to a perceptive intimacy with the material characters of the place, it be not necessary that the spirit be invested with some *material vehicle*, to replace the gross mortal body which it has abandoned. And it is an allowable conjecture that it *may* have such a medium of perception and action, during the interval of waiting;—waiting, in the case of so many of these spirits, so very long—for the resurrection. At the same time it cannot be conceived that even *pure spirits*, if we should suppose *angels* to be such, should not have a most perfect vivid perception of all the fair and magnificent *material* phenomena of the scenes where they are present in execution of their offices. To them such characters of their Master's works cannot be all blank and indifferent.

The idea, "Abraham's bosom," is too figurative (and at the same time Judaical) to admit of definite statement. But it is obviously of intimately and affectionately *social* import. Also it seems to imply that good men of a later age are conveyed into the society of those who have entered the spiritual world long before. There is all imaginable reason to believe that good men will renew their communication with the friends who have preceded them in death.

The expressions, "with Christ," "present with the Lord,"

must imply some much more direct, sensible, evident, manifestation of Christ, than any thing attainable in the mortal state; something more answering to the idea of *society*, than can be realized by the most lively faith; something, indeed, that sets faith, in any sublunary sense and mode of it, aside, by what shall be "far better." The expressions would seem to imply an object of immediate perception—a *personal recognition*.

The great stress uniformly laid in the New Testament on the *resurrection*, proves that the soul will attain a very high advancement in whatever can form its felicity, by the assumption of a glorious and immortal vehicle formed from the element of earth. Sometimes, indeed, there is a kind of ambitious aspiring that would almost wish to have done with *matter* for ever, in the constitution of our existence. If angels,—*any* created beings—be absolutely pure spirits, it would seem as if this combination of *our* spirits with matter, however refined, would mark us as an order of beings essentially and eternally inferior. But could we have therefore a right to complain? For there must be superior and inferior even in happy existence. Doubtless there are orders of beings transcendently, and that must be eternally, superior to the human,—the human, which is, as a plain fact, the lowest of the strictly rational creatures. With regard however to matter, any objection we might feel to be clothed with it may be overruled by the consideration, that our Lord himself appears to have retained a connexion with it in his exalted state; whether for a permanence, after he shall have laid down his mediatorial office, we cannot know and may be allowed to doubt.

Redeemed souls in the intermediate state must be possessed of ample means of happiness, if it were only for this plain reason—that else the long period of their waiting for the final consummation would be insupportable. To those who depart now, or departed recently, it will be a duration of very many ages; and no doubt they know it will. But think of the saints before the deluge, or in the patriarchal ages, foreseeing that consummation, at the distance of many thousand years, or at least having now had the actual proof of the long delay. We must not imagine them exercising *patience*, since that implies something endured, suffered;

but, to cause them an entire complacency under this immensely protracted delay of their highest felicity,—to secure them invariably happy in their present time and state, century after century, millennium after millennium,—to prevent such earnestness of anticipation as would partake of restlessness;—to do this, what mighty resources for enjoyment they must possess! And these resources must be in the activity of the intellectual faculties and the affections; in attaining truth, in loving goodness, admiring grandeur, adoring the Divinity. Nor can we well conceive they should be in a state of total inactivity in a more *practical* sense; that they should be, so to speak, *laid aside* in an inert existence, while activity is prevailing, in all probability, through the whole empire of the Almighty. Should it not be probable that the servants of God, of every order, everywhere in the universe, and in every stage of their existence, have something to *do*, some office to execute? And if such be the vocation of departed human spirits, it might be no violence of conjecture to suppose they may sometimes, some of them, have appointments in a certain connexion with the race here, to which by their nature they still belong, though their immediate mortal relation to it has ceased. . . . Benevolent they certainly are; and if they *have* active employments assigned them, it cannot be conceived there are any fitter objects of that benevolence than the poor sojourners in the world they have left. At all events, it is to be presumed that the manner in which their faculties, or call them powers, are exercised, must be that which will make their existence *most worth*, if we may so express it, in the creation,—most worth that they should exist as intelligent beings; and it must be that which will render most service and honour to the Lord of all.

A thought is suggested as to one great difference between the service so rendered, of whatever special kind it be, and that which was rendered by piety in the mortal and partly sinful life preceding. For if, as we must believe, death be to good men the end of all sin, and the emancipated spirit be constituted immediately and absolutely holy, then its activity, being perfectly conformed to the divine law, will need no pardon. It will not, therefore, be under the economy of *redemption*, in the same sense as the very imperfect

obedience in the mortal state. What a strange contrast this must make in consciousness and review!

Another suggestion arises, in respect to those who have already been during an immensely long period, according to *our* measures of time, in that separate state. Their recollected mortal life must appear to them, in point of duration, most insignificant in their retrospect. What an unimaginable power of memory they must possess if they retain it vividly in sight after so vast an interval, occupied, as we assume, with a continual, and, perhaps, very various exercise of their faculties. But after all our conjectures, imaginings, and almost impatient speculations, here we still are, in front of the awful impervious veil.—How striking to consider, while we stand here, that one and another of our friends, with us just as yesterday, inquisitively conversing, perhaps on this very subject, are now, are at this instant, in the midst of the reality; have experimental knowledge of two worlds, while we are yet confined to one.

And next, the consideration that we also shall erewhile, some of us, very shortly, go into the light and amazement of that revelation. What an emphatic call to the utmost diligence and earnestness to be ready for the transition,—and what an intensely severe reproach to indifference, negligence, and absorption of the soul in temporal things, while consciously approaching every moment nearer to so portentous an event.

My dear sir, you will believe that I am fully aware how little there is in these pages to any other effect than that of *stimulating* inquiry, and showing the impossibility of answering it. Still the thoughtful mind *cannot*, and ought not, to let the great subject alone. We *must* continue inquiring, till we obtain an answer *elsewhere*. . . .

P. S.—I read, slightly indeed, soon after its publication, Taylor's "Physical Theory of another Life," but, as far as I recollect, he takes no distinct account of the intermediate state, speculating almost exclusively, and very ingeniously, on the *final* state. The scriptural arguments (and the others) for the mutual recognition after death of those who have been friends on earth, are well brought together in one of *Gisborne's Essays*, in a small volume, of which I forget the exact title. . . .

## CCVI. TO THE REV. THOMAS COLES.

*Stapleton, Aug. 23, 1839.*

.... I have to thank you for your letter, written under circumstances of mournful interest, anticipations so soon to be realized. Then you could hold converse with the object of your affectionate solicitude; now it is silence and absence as complete as two different worlds can make it. How strange, how striking it is to reflect, that the loved person who was *here* in living communication but a few days since, is now in a realm invisible and unknown, and (wherever it is) unimaginably different from this, where he was and is not. How much within this so brief an interval he has attained to know which we know not, and could not know, in even a sojourn on earth of a thousand years. How vast a movement forward, made in one moment, in the career of a human spirit! But what other movements, thus sudden perhaps, are effected by the progress of duration, in an eternal career! *Any* view of eternity is overwhelming to thought, but peculiarly to the thought that we, that this very soul shall exist for ever. Sometimes, even apart from the idea of retribution, it seems almost fearful. "How can I sustain an endless existence? How can I prolong sentiment and action for ever and ever? What may or can become of me in so stupendous a predicament? What an accumulation of miracles to preserve my faculties, my being, from becoming exhausted and extinct!"

How can there be an undecaying, ever new, and fresh vitality and animation, to go powerfully along with an infinite series of objects, changes, excitements, activities?

While sympathizing with you under the mournful dispensation, I must congratulate you on that by which it is so happily alleviated, the delightful confidence that it is well with him who has departed. And the more cordial will be this consolation from the circumstance, that (as we heard it here), in the earlier stage of his illness, his mind was oppressed by gloomy apprehensions. How happy a change for *him*, as antecedent and preparatory to the still happier change accomplished in his final hour. You will have sometimes mused on what might have been, if God had willed it; how your son, thus brought under the full influence of

religion, might have been appointed to a protracted life of Christian excellence and social usefulness. You can easily figure him as passing through many years of such a life, a pleasure to yourself and a benefit to others. But you know that the sovereign will had *reasons* for deciding otherwise, and that those reasons, if they could be made intelligible to you, you would absolutely and emphatically approve. It is probable that he, the subject of the decision, does, by this time, understand and approve them, and has a complacent confidence that you, not as yet understanding them, will devoutly acquiesce. How much he has at present the advantage of you, if he has a clear manifestation of that concerning which you are called to exercise submissive faith!

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CCVI.\* TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

1839.

. . . . There is nothing for me to say, save and except an expression of my gratification that we may now be confident of having you here, for a term, I hope, as long as the life of *both* us two.—Which of us is to leave this dark world the first?—On supposition that the GREAT BOOK should be placed before you, with intimation that, if you chose (being permitted) to open at such a page, you would read the year, the month, the day, appointed for your entrance on another world,—could you forbear? Suppose you had opened the volume where you would have just only to raise the next leaf, would you touch its edge, and, deliberating, decide to leave it still lying flat, the portentous page on the other side?—I am supposing that you were assured, on *the right authority*, of exemption from divine inhibition, and therefore culpability.

. . . . Thank you for sending *The Watchman*. Some of it I have read, and do really mean to read all in it that relates to the question. I have read *very* little, hardly any thing, of the long debates filling one half-score of columns after another of the *Morning Chronicle*.

As to the whole affair that has raised so prodigious a hubbub, one cannot help feeling that it is worthy of all satire.



*A National Education*\*—There are millions of children and youth sorely wanting it; and there is a proposition for applying a miserable dribble of money to such a purpose—no less than £30,000,—about as much as is paid out of the public purse to some two or three sinecurist placemen—not *one-third* of what is paid to the Queen Dowager; and what a combustion about it over all the land! It is a mighty engine constructing, to be worked by the pope and the devil. Verily they have not been accustomed to work so cheap. They must have found out how to make a little go a great way. I wish they would be as moderate in all other departments of their receipts and expenditures. We should then be able to do without divers things, Methodism among the rest. Said Methodism has lent itself in aid of what we perfectly well know to be the real principle, and under but thin disguise, of the aristocracy and the great majority of the church, viz. a mortal hatred of the mental improvement of

\* " . . . . I should first answer your question respecting an article on National Education, by confessing that it is not at all within my competence to produce the kind of paper which is required, and would alone be considered of any value at the present juncture.

"As to the urgent *need* of Education, as shown in a sort of general survey of the mental education of the people, I have long since done my best, in a production which has never obtained much attention, the third, rather small and very diligently revised edition remaining still a heavy commodity in the market. It would be of very small interest in the Review to go, now, on *that* ground. The thing required is a much more particular and *technical* discussion—turning on the power and policy of the legislature—the amount, and kind, and effect, of the existing means of education,—the involvement of the subject with the interest and claims of the Established Church,—statement and comparison of the various plans proposed—manner and measure in which religion, the Bible, &c., should be included in any proposed scheme—a reference to the Irish system and controversy—Lord Brougham's proposed bill—probable efficacy or not, of any national system unaided by compulsion, &c., &c. Now all this would require such an extent of reading—so many miles' length of pamphlets, speeches, tracts, &c., as I have no eyes to endure, nor memory to retain—not to say judgment to digest and estimate. A practical acquaintance also, by much and various actual inspection, of modes of education, would be of material use as a qualification of the writer.

"Most flagrantly and infamously glaring as the legislative and ecclesiastical neglect has been up to this hour, I have yet but slender hope that anything of great and unmixed good will be accomplished. . . . The affair of popular education is one of the things which sometimes makes one covet a wise and virtuous disposition."—*Mr. Foster to the Rev. Dr. Price, Feb. 1838.*

the mass of the people. They would rather (the Methodists I mean) that the miserable multitude should be left in their ignorance and barbarism (an ignorance and barbarism no longer, as formerly, inert, prostrate, and obsequious, but strongly rankling and fermenting into active mischief), than that they should be educated in any manner not making the *specialities* of religion the principal thing.

But, indeed, ——— I observe, is for making quite a clear business of it—is for having no national education at all, since the government, he says, have not only no duty, but no right to take any concern in the education of the people. Duly tax the people, and punish them when they commit crimes, and there *their* business ends; for I do not see what business they have even to make *laws* for them, to tell them what *is* wrong; for law is always considered as a *moral education*, not less than a rule of punishment.

. . . . Where there is not downright hypocrisy, there may be affectation and cant. To hear this Methodist declamation, one might think that *knowledge*, cultivating good sense, as the opposites of brutish ignorance, vulgarity, and coarse sensuality, were of no value at all, unless as combined with —not the *general* principles of religion, but with a special creed. To read well, write well, to understand the language well; to be ready in arithmetic, to acquire some of the plainer principles of the most useful sciences were utterly worthless;—as well be without them, unless as interwoven throughout with the catechism. At this rate a boy should not be taught a mechanical art, or a trade, unless in immediate connexion with detailed articles of faith. What a nuisance, therefore, are the thousands of private day-schools which are teaching these supposed useful matters. There is a large quantity of *cant* in all this.

Nor was it to stand for any thing that in the government's plan there was to be a clergyman at the head of the institution, to see to the religious instruction of the *church* pupils, and that an arrangement was to be made for the religious instruction, separately, of the dissenting portion of them. As to the Roman Catholic portion (or *popish*, I would name it), they are to be left in the pure savage state, unless their own party have adequate means and exertion to give them some little education.

As to the real intrinsic character of popery (which shows itself when there is nothing to keep it under restraint as in Spain), I fully agree with ———. But he admits that, *practically* it is very greatly modified in this protestant country; it is so, too, in *France*, a non-protestant country. But then, does not this, just in that proportion, modify and reduce the harm of its combination with the school-teaching in this country? Or would he allow himself to be taken for one of those dreamers who are apprehending the approach of such an ascendancy of popery here as will set loose its real character into action? . . . . He has great real or pretended reverence for the established church. But what does the increase of popery say of the quality and efficacy of that church as a protestant guardian? And, talk of popery! It is in the grand centre and vomitory of that church that popery is daily augmenting, and threatening to inundate the ecclesiastical domains.

P.S. I have hardly expressed with due strength the observation that ——— and ——— must wish that the Irish, and equally any other popish nation, should be left wholly and absolutely *uneducated*, abandoned literally to the savage state, since the intermixed popery vitiates the whole thing essentially. Perhaps they will reply, "No, our objection is to a *protestant state* patronizing and paying for such education;" it comes in effect to the same. The protestant state is to refuse because such education is absolutely bad, worse than nothing, and what, therefore, it cannot be wished that *any* state should confer or inflict on the people. They must deprecate that the Irish popish gentry should, from their own private means, support such an education. At any rate, supposing that they (these gentry) could not or would not, and that the people were so imbued with popery that they could not (as how should they?) yield to receive an expressly protestant education, it would then be the duty of the protestant state to teach them nothing (*except their liability to be hanged*), and leave them to become, as nearly as possible, like the beasts of the field.

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## CCVII. TO THE REV. ROBERT AINSLIE.

[On Socialist publications.]

Stapleton, September 16, 1839.

I am truly obliged for the packet from you, forwarded to me by Mr. Wills; though I confess that no envelope, of paper or any other substance, ever brought me any thing so repulsively nauseous—a perfect moral *assafetida*.

As to the object for which it is sent to me;\* I did endeavour to make my answer unequivocal when you favoured me with a short visit here. To answer a polite and estimable man, intent purely on a benevolent purpose with the blunt, curt, impatient, “No, I will not,”—“say no more,” is very ungracious to the feeling of both parties. I had to plead off in such shifts of language as *intended* this meaning, without rudely *saying* it.

A man necessarily best knows what his situation is, and what are his aptitudes and abilities (rather I should say, in this case, *inabilities*) for any given task.

For one thing, as to *time*. Your letter says “a few days.” Now I have the mortification to confess to you, that to compose a short essay on the subject named would take me *months*, literally and certainly months,—and not the lowest, or nearly the lowest, number in this plural term. With a mind of slower operation than any I ever knew that *could* operate at all, and with eyes that painfully recoil from much reading, and a memory that hardly retains any thing that I do read, I should have (for the purpose of making a tract of say twenty pages) to go about reading, comparing, selecting, digesting, and trying to condense—with such an amount of still unsatisfactory labour as no one can imagine for me. There would be no idle pride or vanity of doing the thing well; but without such a hard and slow labour, I should have no feeling that it *was* done well. And for the labour of composition I have, and I may say, always have had, a very great repugnance—often an extreme and almost invincible repugnance; whether this be a fault, I know not; but it is an obstacle, and in part a disability.

\* Mr. Foster had been requested to write a tract on “The Existence of God,” for the London City Mission.

As another thing—for any small matter that I may think I can perform in the writing way, I am at present under a positive obligation to another quarter,—an obligation to which I am so ill responding, that I am mortified and ashamed.

It strikes me that it must be a great advantage for addressing the classes in question, on any of the proposed topics, that the writer should be one of those who have the opportunity of a direct or very near acquaintance with the parties to be dealt with, in order to be aware of the *particular ways* in which their minds are perverted, of their sort of notions, feelings and talk, the tempers they manifest, the modes of evasion, the signs they give of sincerity (in the coarse sense of the word) or of insincerity. The general argument may thus have many special adaptations, according to characters and circumstances. It is obvious that this can be much better done by an observant person who is in the close neighbourhood of the parties, so as to have something approaching to an immediate knowledge of their current sayings and doings—as Mr. Giles has been in the north, and as some of your intelligent friends probably are in London.

The gross stupidity, together with the desperate, reckless impiety, manifested in some of the pieces they are circulating, seem to preclude all hope of doing them any good. The thing seems like a moral epidemic, breathed from hell, destined to be permitted for a time to sweep a portion of the people to destruction, in defiance of all remedial interference. They are a doomed race, and their destiny will be accomplished. Still it is right that means should be tried, if it were merely that good men should evince their own fidelity to the good cause, fulfilling a duty which is such independently of any calculation of results.

Unless I had been in a condition to render the small requested contribution of aid, it will seem a cheap and thankless kind of benevolence for me to say that I greatly applaud and admire the system of operations in which you are so meritoriously concerned. It is however, a true though valueless tribute.

## CCVIII. TO J. PURSER, ESQ.

*Stapleton, February 4, 1840.*

. . . . The alarming danger now happily, for the present and some time to come, blown over, that the Tories might come into power, had a main reference to the too probably dreadful consequences in Ireland. For the escape, the *temporary* escape of both countries, thanks to the Irish members of parliament, and to *Dan.* as their imperial chief. The high-sounding epithet is authorized by the plain fact that there is no individual, probably in the world, who, on the strength of what he is in his mere self, in the absence of all accessories of office, rank, wealth, connection, has so prodigious a power. We of the reforming (or call it radical) class have exceptions, and grave ones, to take against him, but on the whole are vastly glad to have him as the Achilles of our camp. We want every strong hand against the proud and powerful party arrayed in fierce opposition to every kind of national improvement. Do but look at their temper and purposes, more flagrantly manifested of late than ever before. Hatred of every thing tending to favour and advance the interests of the people; hatred of *popular education* on any other condition than that of rigorous subservience to the church; hatred of dissenters and their just claims; hatred of all attempts at the correction of old corrupted institutions; bigotry in all forms; and an immense quantity of the most loathsome hypocrisy under the pretence and boast of zeal for Protestantism; a furious bellowing kept up for the basest purposes by very many who neither know nor care any thing at all about real religion.

You advert to the "*Oxford Tract*" concern. It is curious enough that just contemporaneously with the loudest burst of the cleric outcry about Protestantism, a section of them, rapidly extending as it is understood, are forswearing that same Protestantism, and veering far and fast toward Rome. I have read very little on the subject, not even Taylor's pieces,\* which however I do mean to read sometime soon; very able and effective I hear on all hands. It is but small

\* Ancient Christianity and the Doctrines of the Oxford Tracts for the Times. By the Author of "Spiritual Despotism."

interest that I feel about the whole affair, excepting in one point of view, its being a schism in the Establishment, tending to confusion and dislocation, an intimation of rot and cracks in the timbers of the old pernicious edifice. On this account it pleases me much; for while it is too true that it is doing *some* injury to religion, I hope it will do much more damage to what has been and continues infinitely pernicious to Christianity, a state-established Hierarchy.

All I have lived to see has confirmed me faithful to the principles of that early time which you well remember. I want, if I could, to repel the suspicion that my favourite early associate friend, and—dare I say?—pupil, has somewhat deflected toward the more fashionable side. . . .

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CCIX. TO SIR C. E. SMITH, BART.

March 9, 1840.

. . . . On supposition that you saw my letter to Dr. L., I shall not need to repeat in many words what I observed as to the position of writers in the controversy, that the work is most appropriately and advantageously in the hands of men vigilantly attentive to the contemporary movements; immediately apprized of the course of opinions; habitually inspecting periodical publications; prompt to seize topics and occasions as they arise; men who, in a phrase of the field, can *shoot flying*. Here *specialities* must make a large part of the service;—for, surely, we are not now to be constantly repeating the common-places of the argument.

We cannot but believe that intelligent controversy will do *some* good in favour of truth. It will at least tend to give dissenters a better hold of their principles, of which the mass of them are very ignorant; and it may prevent some waverers from going over to the establishment. Will it do much more? Do you *expect* that it will? Where are the *proselytes* from the adherents to the church—adherents confirmed such by either opinion or habit? With one or two exceptions, what clergyman (any thing worth as an acquisition to us) has become a dissenter? and what laymen of any account have fallen into our ranks? My sphere of

knowledge is extremely narrow; but I do not learn that even the extreme, and in many instances violent and outrageous bigotry of the clergy, so glaring in the present times, has had the effect of exciting in church-goers a disgust against the *church itself*. They cling to it in spite of any dislike or disapprobation (*if* indeed they feel it) of the spirit of so many of its ministers. It seems to be only on those who are adverse or indifferent to the church, that this furious illiberality has the effect—the good effect I will call it—of creating or confirming an antipathy to the establishment. And is it not probable that this virulent bigotry will do ten times more for the cause of dissent in the way of consolidation among themselves, and of acquisition from the intelligent indifferents, if such there be, than all the theoretical argumentation? Argument will be but a subsidiary force; let it be added, however, as a sort of guide to the action of the stronger force.

Here occurs to me a consideration which strikes me very strongly. You wish the controversy to be carried on in an amicable manner. Quite right for an intercommunication direct, and almost, as it were, personal, between the parties. But at the same time in an interchange of reasonings on these terms, the dissenter is precluded from by far the most effective of his resources; I mean, an unqualified exhibition of the *practical character of the Hierarchy* reviewed on the wider ground of history, or, (more immediately available) as seen in our own history during the last few generations, and as manifested in the present times.

. . . . Look at the present state and temper of the church; the intolerance of the most ostensible and prominent portion of it, acquiesced in by the main or whole body, or at least not protested against by any part of it;—the firm alliance with political corruption; the opposition to all sorts of reform; the identifying of Christianity with the establishment, or almost giving the precedence to the latter; the essentially worldly nature of the whole system of appointment by patronage, purchase at auction, &c. &c., and the melancholy and disastrous fact that a vast majority of the clergy teach a doctrine fatally erroneous, if the doctrine of the reformers be true. Now, all this belongs to the dissenters' argument, it is of the essence of their case, and without it they can do.



but very partial justice to that case. They have a right to insist on this as manifesting the *essentially vicious nature* of an established church; that these are not mere *incidents*, foreign and separable; if they *had* been so, in what country so likely as in England should they have been cleared off, leaving the establishment a pure Christian institution? Why do I trouble you to read this prolixity of sentences? It is to show that the dissenting principle cannot be asserted in the fulness of its legitimate argument in such a controversy as churchmen will admit to be amicable or even civil. They will require you to come away out of sight of all this, and to go quietly with them on some ideal ground of a plausible theory. They will talk to you (just as if the thing were not palpably Utopian) about a supposed ecclesiastical institution, that should send throughout the country some dozen thousand pious, well-disciplined, diligent, exemplary instructors, vigilantly superintended by faithful, zealous, apostolic bishops, authorized and aided in every way by patrons and a government intent on the spiritual welfare of the people; and then they will challenge you with the question, "*Would not this be an excellent thing, far better than leaving the important concern to voluntarism, fanaticism, and chance?*" To which the proper answer would be, "It is not worth making a question about so idle a fiction; wait till the government, the prelacy, and the body of aristocratic patronage shall consist at least of men decidedly religious; till the universities shall be 'schools of the prophets,' and till young men shall enter the church no longer as a mere *profession* or in pursuit of the *prizes*, but from the serious desire to promote religion. *Then* bring the question into discussion. In the meantime we must be allowed to judge of an establishment according to its actual quality and working, as exemplified in such institutions, heretofore and at the present time, and not according to any fanciful and impracticable theory."

By all means, let the arguments of a mere theoretical kind, such as *may* be debated amicably with the better tempered of the opponents, and especially the scriptural one, so much insisted on by Dr. Wardlaw and others, be kept in action. They will be adapted to the small proportion of speculative thinkers. But for popular effect there is incomparably

greater power in an exhibition of the actual vices and mischiefs of establishments, and our own in particular. And the recent and present spirit of the church is such as to deserve no forbearance of this mode of conducting the war—a *defensive* war as it is. But here I am reminded that I should not, before a further inspection of the papers in your volume, assume that you have wholly forborne the use of such ammunition. The Oxford party are working to good purpose—fast cutting away the old boasted ground of the establishment—*its efficacy to maintain an uniformity of faith.*

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CCX. TO SIR C. E. SMITH, BART.

April 9, 1840.

.... I most sincerely thank you for the gratification the book has afforded me, and I should add the valuable *instruction*—but for the misfortune of having about the worst memory of anybody in England, that is not absolutely in dotage. In strife against this sad grievance, I have read many of the papers two or three times.

All your readers, even your opponents, must have been ready to testify to the urbanity, or I should rather say, the Christian spirit, in which you have declared your opinions on both the ecclesiastical and political topics. I cannot add any expression of hope that those opponents will have admitted any conviction from your arguments, judicious as they are, and set forth in so excellent a spirit; for it is a fact, all the world over, that no opponent is ever convinced by controversy. I cannot recollect, that ever in my life, I convinced any person, even in any degree, by opposition in argument. How happens it, that all the *argument* on the subject of religious establishments, never has gained over an *unit per thousand* of some fifteen thousand clergymen, a tolerably considerable portion of them being, it may be presumed, men of conscience, and many of these being also men of large information and highly disciplined intellect?

While you acknowledge yourself to be hopeless of the clergy, I am glad that you can see cause to be even “*sanguine*” as to a portion of the gentry; since it is a judgment

which you have the means of forming on an extensive acquaintance in the country and in London, with individuals, and with the signs of movement and change in opinions. Within my most diminutive sphere of acquaintance I am not aware of any favourable indications.

.... We shall look with much interest beyond mere curiosity to the consequences of the commotion in Scotland; for a better understanding of which I am much indebted to your papers on the subject. It was not till lately that it attracted much of my attention. Some well written letters, in one of the daily papers, within the last few months, drew my partiality towards the "non-intrusionists." But I was taken considerably aback by the account of a late public meeting of dissenters in Edinburgh. .... They said very justly, the movers of this tumult are, after all, the determined maintainers of an *establishment*, and grossly inconsistent, if not dishonest ones. .... They want to combine the privileges of dissenters (such as *we* maintain, at a great and voluntary cost) with the emolument and advantageous station of an establishment. They would repel and turn out the state, at one door, from claiming any interference in their self-authorized proceedings, and summon it in at another, to render them its humble services, and pay their stipends and all their expenses.

.... I attempted to read Mr. Alston's pamphlet; I mean to do it; but in the first trial I stopped short. In the first few pages I was dumfounded at his ignorance in citing "the parable of the tares," and his outright assertion (an assertion however got quite in vogue), that personal wickedness is no disqualification for the ministry of religion. The grave avowal of this impious absurdity was not likely to allow my memory of facts a quiet sleep. ....

Your opponent F. H. (Dr. Arnold I believe) is evidently a very intelligent and a candid man. But what a plight such a man gets into, when he is to defend an establishment. His sixth letter for instance. It appears to me a piece of inextricable involvement; but indeed I had such difficulty to understand it, that I had not patience to make the competent trial. One needs no elaborate investigation to be very sure that all this business of arrangement, gradation, centralization, &c., has nothing to do with the plain,

simple concern of teaching the Christian religion to the people.\*

Yet it is necessary there should be some minds able and resolute to traverse every part of the debatable ground; and you have done your part most worthily thus far—thus far as only an introduction, I trust, to a long sequel of valuable service; and while I am too old and frigid to be sanguine about anything but the coming of the millennium at some distant period, I am glad you *can* be sanguine, as a necessary temper of mind for making zealous efforts. Are you able to extend the warm play of this feeling or temperament (if so, I should greatly envy you) to the political affairs of our country? We were in exuberant delight (vain dream!) at obtaining the Reform Bill. Even I was so foolish, in spite of my desperate conviction of the depravity of human nature. How confidently we specified the abuse it would sweep away; the beneficent measures, schemes, institutions, it would triumphantly carry into effect!

Well! we have had this grand panacea coming now on eight years; and, through all this long trial, its value and efficacy have been crumbling away under a powerful and unremitting process, so complete now in system, means, and agency, as to have produced a general conviction that a general election would be the regular funeral of the vaunted Bill. And what help? what resource? there can be nothing even decently and distantly, approaching to a genuine Representative House without the Ballot, and that we cannot have.

.... From an account in yesterday's Morning Chronicle, it seems probable that *Thorogood* is doomed to die in prison; one did rather feel as if he carried the conscientious principle to an extreme. I would pay the church-rate when legally demanded, as I would surrender my money to a highway-man, just to escape a greater evil. But still, his suffering example *may* do great good,—*will*, unless the clergy and their corrupt adherents shall resolutely and successfully maintain their detestable courts. There is no

\* *Vide* DR. ARNOLD'S Miscellaneous Works. *Letters to "Hertford Reformer."* Letter ii. p. 436. Letter v. p. 449. Letter ix. p. 466. Letter x. p. 470. Letter xiv. p. 486. Letter xvii. p. 502. "Centralization," is discussed particularly in Letter x.

hateful part of their institutions which they have not a *thoro'-good* will to maintain and perpetuate.

Has there fallen in your way an "Essay on Apostolical Succession," written by Powell, a Wesleyan minister? It has very speedily come to a second edition. Have hardly read any of it yet: but some intelligent persons tell me, it is very able and effective. Great research is evident on the slightest glance.

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COXI. TO JAMES FAWCETT, ESQ.

[On the character of the late Dr. Fawcett.]

March 12, 1840.

Your friendly letter ought not to have remained so long unanswered; and it would not if I had really felt that my slight, and I may now say remote, reminiscences of your venerable ancestor could be of any value for the description of his character. But they can be but as nothing in comparison with what you have had the means of knowing from persons associated with him during a large portion of his life; especially from my estimable friend, your late father. You must yourself also, up to some considerable advance in youth, have been familiarly acquainted with him.

It is now (oh the flight of *Time*!) nearly forty years since, in a transient visit, I even saw him; and approaching to fifty since I was habitually near him. I have never heard any distinct account, and can have no conjecture, what effect on his character and habits was produced by the experiences of the many years of his later life, during which I was far off and wholly a stranger.

It is very superfluous to say, that any now surviving person who ever spent, as I did, several years in his house, his society, and under his instructions, must have retained, to this day, a deep impression of his excellence; and not the less so for any recollection of minor points of character which they might have considered as defects.

His piety was a pervading principle through his whole mind, and went into all the practicable habits of his life; it

was uniform and rational—by which latter epithet I mean that it was accompanied, or rather blended, with sound judgment—with *good sense*. His social devotional exercises (as in the family worship) were remarkable for solemnity, simplicity, and variety, having (at the time that I was an attendant on them) no recurrence of set phrases, but passing freely into any form of thought and expression. His preaching, always serious, instructive, and pertinent to the subject, was yet, I will confess, deficient in what I may call exciting and stimulant qualities. It had not bold prominent ideas, original or striking passages; it was considerably of the tenor usually denominated *common-place*. And the manner was not advantageous for attention or attraction. There was too *intense a gravity*—an aspect and cast of delivery bearing a character of sadness, gloom, and austerity, which really had, on young persons at least, a repressive effect. The manner might almost be denominated *funereal*. There was nothing assumed or affected in all this; it was expressive of the preacher's temperament, which was of a deeply sombre colour.

This was felt in social intercourse. His younger friends could not be on what I may call *companionable* terms with him. They were kept at a certain distance by the gravity of his character, which precluded a free, uncautious familiarity. It is probable this temperament, perhaps originally natural to him, had been much confirmed by severe bodily afflictions, by difficulties and grievances experienced at times in his ministerial course, and by a habitually gloomy view (a true one) of the state of the world and the depravity of human nature.

In applying the terms grave, gloomy, austere—I should very specially observe that there was nothing *acrid* or *cynical*; he had kind affections and genuine benevolence; compassion for distress, a concern for the welfare of all with whom he was connected, and delight in the signs of commencing piety, especially in young persons.

I should have noted that at the time when I was most with him, he was in advanced age, and had long held an acknowledged precedence in respectability and authority to any other minister in all that part of the country. This had contributed to render him very sensitive, rather

morbidly so, sometimes, to any thing that looked like a deficiency of respect. It was not, therefore, easy to maintain with him any thing in the form of *debate*. He was apt to be hurt by opposition of opinion, as if it were a personal disrespect; and could not go into a free discussion on the equal condition of "give and take." He was not arrogant and dictatorial; by no means; but he felt dissent or opposition as of the nature of an *offence*, and brooded over it with a painful irritation. I do not think he attributed to himself extraordinary talent, or deemed his writings as above the level of plain performances, aimed to do good. But he would have been aggrieved by any remarks of the nature of animadversion. I remember, when he was about printing his Family Bible, he sent to me, at a great distance, the first two or three printed sheets, with a request for any observations that might occur to me. But I did not—really felt that I dared not—venture any remarks to the effect of indicating *faults*.

It was the wish of some of his friends, myself included, that he had more limited himself in the matter of authorship. He was, at the same time, very free from *ostentation* of himself in that capacity. He rarely and but briefly made any reference to the works he published.

He had a lively perception, and was liberal and animated in praise, of the merits of other authors, whether contemporary, or of older date.

Considering that the order of his religious principles and feelings was so much according to what might be called the *puritanical* standard, it was remarkable how little contracted were his taste and compass of reading. He read with pleasure any sort of books that were good of their kind—history, poetry, fiction, even romance. I remember, at this distance of time, a conversation on one of *Fielding's novels*, his discriminating observations on which showed how attentively and with what interest he had read it.

Considering also his tendency to gloom and sadness, it was remarkable what a lively perception and relish he had for wit and humour. A short but genuine laugh would show how instantly and with what pleasure he took it. I recollect his even lending himself, in a sly, quiet way, to

humour a practical joke, rather at the expense of Mrs. F., on some occasion of a violent and mistaken *fret*.

He was far from discouraging vivacity in the young people around him, to any extent short of absolute folly.

In short, as a comprehensive observation on all these miscellaneous particulars, he had in all ways a candid and liberal feeling, as amiable as it was remarkable in a person of his temperament. Or if there should appear to be some exception to this in what I have described of his unfortunate sensitiveness to opposition—his aptitude to feel any sign of disagreement as a deficiency of respect—let it be remembered that there was in this feeling no harshness, bitterness, or disposition to inflict pain in return. It was simply *his own painful feeling*, without *hostile reaction*; and he was easily conciliated when shown that there was no intention to hurt or displease him.

One virtue was pre-eminently his—indefatigable industry. This sometimes made me ashamed when with him, and many times in remembrance since. Every part of every day, the whole year round, he was busy in some useful employment. The only observable interval would be, that he would sometimes sit at ease smoking his pipe for a quarter of an hour. He took much pleasure in *book-binding*; but while employed in folding, stitching, &c., he would always have some one (often myself) employed in reading to him, for the benefit of both. During this exercise his large various knowledge would afford many useful points of information or comment. He did not care what the book was, if there was anything valuable in it. His favourite author at that time was Dr. Johnson.

The above, dear sir, is but a very meagre sketch; I wish my memory had been more faithful. The time referred to has greatly faded on its page of record. But it will, to the end of life, retain, faithfully engraven, the *general lines* of a character of extraordinary excellence. From such a character there will be but little detracted by such particulars as I have ventured to remark as weaknesses or defects. He was one of the few individuals who in that period (at least the earlier part of it), and in that part of the country, were conspicuous as holding forth the light of evangelical religion, and as doing honour to the cause.



of dissent. By many more than his descendants his character will be long held in veneration. . . .

P.S. I might have noticed that Dr. Fawcett's *personal presence* was uncommonly imposing and authoritative. His saturnine countenance, the habitual seriousness of his look, his powerful voice, his large and tall figure, and a certain unconscious dignity in his measured step would have made on even a stranger an impression of something very different from an ordinary person. . . .

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CCXII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Bourton, July 9, 1840.*

. . . . If one could (may God do what we cannot!) raise the minds of *young* persons to a most decided state of conviction, resolution, exertion, and habitual solicitation of help from Heaven, as to the grand purpose and effectual improvement of life! If they could but fully anticipate the feelings which are brought so impressively into the mind on a near approach of the end of life, combined with reflection on life in its review! How often one regrets the impossibility of imparting to youth some of the gravest thoughts and feelings of age. But yet they can, and happily some of them do, consider that life is passing fast away,—that the one grand purpose of it as a whole, is the proper purpose therefore of each and every part—that at any advanced point of it, it is very lamentable to have to look back on the past stage as lost to that great object—that the race of time to the middle term of life is comparatively short—that in passing down to the *decline*, every year will seem shorter—(according to the concurrent testimony of their seniors) than the preceding—that there is the constant menacing possibility of the career being prematurely closed—that even “the longest day will have an end,”—and then—what then?

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## CCXIII. TO THE REV. B. S. HALL.

*Bourton, July 17, 1840.*

DEAR OLD FRIEND, . . . . What times and events have passed away since *Clapton* was one of the places—the most pleasant of the places—of friendly resort. I have looked up that way with a degree of regret that the ancient attraction thither exists there no more, and in all probability never will again.

I am glad to believe that your *present* position is a more useful one than any former. How utterly improbable it would have appeared, in that long past time to which I have referred, that your appointment in Providence should be where it has now placed you,—and where I trust its merciful favour will abide with you and your family.

The changes and varieties in your past life will have been a profitable discipline for your present vocation, as having given you much experience of human nature and character in its varieties of good and evil. Numberless things will be suggested from your own practical knowledge in aid of those illustrations and instructions which you have to administer to your people. I always consider it an advantage to a preacher, if an observant and reflective man, to have passed through some changes of situation and acquaintance with mankind. I should much like to hear you state some of the results of your now long and diversified experience,—the judgments you have been led to form on divers matters on which we have conversed in years far gone, or which have come in your way during the subsequent course of our lives.

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CCXIV. TO THE REV. W. PECHAY.

[On the Millennium.]

*Stapleton, 1840.*

Your letter would not have remained unacknowledged so unconscionable a length of time, or *any* considerable length of time, if I could have given myself credit for being able

to write five sentences to the purpose on the subject of it. But in truth I have never been led to think particularly on that subject.

The study of Prophecy (as to yet future ages) has carried ingenious and learned men into so many theories and fantastic presumptions, many of them already convicted of folly, that I have never had *faith* enough for it, except as to a few apparently infallible presages—such as the return of the Jews to their ancient land, and the happy dispensation (call it the *millennium*) reserved to shine on this dark world *sometime*—but when? for how very faint are any signs that as yet glimmer on the horizon! At the rate of the progress hitherto of genuine Christianity on the globe, thousands of years may pass away before *that* millennium can arrive—an awful mystery in the Divine Government. But one cannot help indulging a hope, though resting on a loose and arbitrary speculation, that there may come, in some not very distant period, a mighty acceleration, with unprecedented and astonishing events, of the reforming process. If asked the *reason* of such a hope, the answer might be little more than this—that *unless* it shall be so, the world is doomed to an awfully protracted duration of its past and present dismal state; which one is most extremely unwilling to believe.

It may be well for stimulated exertion to entertain a very exaggerated estimate of what is seen and is doing at present. But often one is invaded by a chilling sentiment in hearing the effusions of our good men, when they speak of the zealous operations, and the comparatively diminutive though welcome successes, as if actually the moral world were rapidly changing under our sight, as the physical is in this vernal season.

But as to the particular subject of your letter—the inspired predictions of the happy age which is *sometime* to come on the world, are so strong, and so much in the apparent language of universality, as to allow a confidence, that literally all the human race will then be under the power of the true religion,—were it not for a dark shade of doubt arising from another quarter of prophecy.

The happy season anticipated and promised must be that of the one thousand years of the Apocalypse, during which

the influence of infernal power will be banished or restrained. But then what takes place at the termination of that blissful period? A tremendous combination and insurrection of wicked men, in countless multitude, so bold and fierce in depravity, as to conspire for the destruction of the saints. Now the plain question is, How comes this to be possible? WHENCE this multitude of wicked human beings, *so* wicked, as to aim at the destruction of the righteous,—and *so* numerous, as to be confident of effecting it,—perhaps *reasonably* confident according to ordinary calculation, since to defeat them requires a direct Divine interposition, “fire from heaven?”

Either there must have remained, during the happy period, a very considerable portion of the earth’s inhabitants unsubdued to the kingdom of Christ, in spirit hostile to it and its subjects,—or, if all are good throughout, and to the conclusion of the privileged period, there must then take place a frightful apostacy among them or their descendants. And it would seem that a little time will suffice to bring this grand eruption of evil; since it appears to be spoken of as contemporary with Satan’s “being loosed for a little season.”

Which part of the alternative is the more probable—or rather the less *improbable*? for the phenomenon is in any way marvellously strange—yet plainly and literally a *fact*, if we may at all pretend to know *when* prophecy means a literal fact.

As to the fact of there being a sad prevalence of irreligion at the conclusion of the world, it seems more than implied by such a passage as 1 Thess. v. 3, “When they shall say Peace and safety, &c.” Probably also by Revelation i. 7, “Wail,” &c. The same might be said of our Lord’s own predictions, if we could be certain how to distinguish between what referred to the end of the world, and what was limited to the destruction of Jerusalem.

But the alternative. I confess I am quite at fault for an opinion, or a presumption, whether it be more likely that, during a long succession of centuries and generations, in defiance of such an illustrious manifestation and prevalence of Christianity as may be denominated the *reign* of Christ and his saints on earth, (in accomplishment of the promise,

"The heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession"), there can remain a very considerable portion of the race, any where on the globe in obstinate resistance; or, on the other hand, that speedily after the completion of a certain number of those centuries, in spite of the mighty power which will have been acquired by truth and righteousness, by virtue of long and universal prevalence (to say nothing of the continuance of Divine interposition), there *can* be a desperate, furious, and wide extended apostacy. Either phenomenon confounds one's faculty of thought. One might suggest one consideration, which may be called *economical*. Would it not be a greater *sum of gain* (so to denominate it) to the kingdom of Christ, for the whole world—for all men—to have belonged to it through so many ages, *though* followed by such an apostacy, than, for a considerable or large portion of the race to have *stood out* all that time, and to break forth at last into active rebellion? We have to consider also the radical depravity of human nature, not essentially *abrogated*, but only counteracted, repressed, and corrected by Divine influence even during the happy ages. If there should, for a mysterious reason in the Divine Government, be a suspension of that influence, taken together with a renewed permission (according to the prediction) of the *infernal* influence, we may imagine the possibility of a speedy and dreadful change in at least an immediately succeeding generation.

Taking this into consideration, and at the same time considering the character of *universality* in the language predicting the happy period in prospect, I should *incline* to the hope that literally *all* mankind will then be the genuine subjects of Christ.

I cannot expect that these slight and sceptical surmises should give you any satisfaction. I shall be glad if you gain it by some better mode of inquiry. We shall leave this dark and miserable world very long before the arrival of the commencement of the bright era,—even *you* will though young; yet I hope you will live to see some highly favourable and exhilarating change. But may Heaven grant us to attain a far happier state of existence elsewhere, than that of mortals can be even in the Millennium! . . . .

## CCXV. TO JOHN PURSER, ESQ.

Stapleton, July 29, 1840.

Sometime within the three weeks that I have been on a visit to some old friends and relations in a distant place, which I had not seen for a considerable number of years, and may never see again, Mrs. W. had the kindness to call here, and, as I was told, she had signified, at your request, to make a friendly inquiry. While I was truly gratified by this, I was reproachfully reminded, once again, and for much more than the thousandth time, of my vice of procrastination. *That* is the modified form of delinquency to which I do honestly refer many of my sins of omission, (and certainly the one now in question,) rather than to a worse moral account. Do not *you*, under the universal law of self-love, always assign any few faults that you have to the most *mitigated species* of culpability? If you do *not*, it would go far to prove that those faults *are* few, and are very venial, which indeed I am most willing to believe. I have no doubt I should have testimony to this gratifying fact from Mrs. P. and *six* other primary, and I know not how many secondary, witnesses of most competent knowledge; and surely I may add myself.

Many weeks since, a newspaper under your envelope, indicated to me that I was not forgotten amidst the domestic pleasures and varieties at Rathmines Castle, a scene unknown to me locally, to which I have often transferred my imagination from scenes which I did know in times now so far gone into the past, but very often recalled in pleasing but pensive memory. The times and scenes I can well, even vividly, recall, but not *myself* as I then was. I can almost as little carry myself back to realize my then state of feelings, as I can identify you as you now are, with you as you then were. For myself, I say with a sigh of deep regret, "If all the change effected by Time had but been for the better!" But the evil things that cleave to, or rather inhere in, this depraved nature, are the things that least give way to the changing operation of Time. . . . A strange feeling arises at the confronted looks of persons mutually and distinctly recollecting what those looks were at a distance of time greater than the average duration of

human life, when there has been no meeting in the interval, to *graduate*, as it were, the appearance and perception of change. What a thing it would be if the *souls* could be made as plainly visible as the visages, in a comparison between their early and their actual state. For myself, while acknowledging that early state to have been far, very far indeed, from what it ought to have been, I have to acknowledge also that it would require extreme hardihood to make or allow a full plain exhibition of the present state, as in comparison, to the view of a judicial moral and religious observer. "What!" he would say, "this—only *this*—after an interval of forty years for correction and improvement, with means, advantages, and monitions innumerable, and convictions and even good resolutions endlessly repeated?" I might well be in haste to close up the miserable spectacle against further inspection, confining it thenceforward to my own conscious reflection. But no; it *cannot* be so confined; there is another Inspector and Judge! A solemn and alarming thought; when I consider what might and should have been effected in this long interval, and the miserable account of what *has* been, adverting in addition to what I believe and know to have been accomplished in the mind and the life of some of my better and wiser fellow mortals and co-evals. I should be sunk in the profoundest melancholy, but for the grand sole resource of the Divine mercy as set forth in the propitiatory sacrifice of the Mediator. I often think what a state of feeling mine would be, under a disbelief of this doctrine. And much I wonder how the rejectors of the doctrine, unless they have a lofty opinion of their own merits, can endure to look forward to the future account in appearing before the supreme and righteous Judge. I never recollect our friend Mrs. O. without great regret for what you have told me of her religious faith, in which, however, you said, I think, that she professes to feel confident and complacent, even in the face of that perfect *law*, which exacts an absolute conformity, without failure or defect, as the condition of acceptance for those who refuse to plead the atonement made by "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." Let us be thankful for not having been suffered to be misled into so disastrous an order of religious opinions. . . .

.... For Ireland we have been in extreme alarm during the agitation of Lord Stanley's detestable bill, the threatened success of which would have rekindled all the inflammable passions of your island. You have had *Dan*, I see, about you at Rathmines, lately. He is the man I should be more curious to see and hear than any other individual in the world whom I have not seen. There is not, in the whole world, any other person who has so much moral power, in virtue solely of the individual's own personal qualities. Our reformers, you may be sure, set a very high value on his agency and co-operation—to a certain extent—but totally disown him in his wild project of "repeal;" I really cannot understand how he can imagine the practicability, or how he can foresee in the actual attempt anything less fearful than a civil war. . . .

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## CCXVI. TO MRS. STOKES.

*Stapleton, December 7, 1840.*

.... You can retrace almost numberless circumstances, occurrences, points of time, situations at home and at a distance, all combining to tell the value of a relationship, which it has pleased the heavenly Father to dissolve—to dissolve as to the present world; but leaving a delightful anticipation of what shall be recovered in another.

In the recollection of that long course of associated life, you have the consolation of reflecting that it was a journey in the right direction for a better world; that thus it had not solely its present satisfactions in each passing stage, but had its value with respect to *hereafter*. You will think with gratitude of the vast difference between this and a case of separation in which the survivor has the melancholy consideration that the now terminated course of united life had nothing in it tending to a happy future;—nothing to excite the joyful hope of a delightful meeting again; that whatever satisfactions and advantages it had, they all belonged exclusively to the time in which they were possessed, were all confined to the interests of the present world, and are therefore now in all senses gone and lost, leaving no-



thing to carry the desolate mind forward in anticipation of a blessed sequel elsewhere. You will have pleasure, too, in considering how soon, comparatively, at so advanced an age, you may expect that the future you are looking forward to will become present, and restore to you, in a far higher condition of excellence and felicity, what you are now mourning as taken away from you for a while. . . .

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## CCXVII. TO THE EDITOR.

*London, July 17, 1841.*

. . . . I do most truly thank you for your kind invitation, which, supposing the case exactly your own, you would feel yourself under an inhibition to avail yourself of. Imagine yourself to have been more weeks than you could reckon, and which you were reluctant to *try* to reckon, absent from your habitat, workshop, and domestic associates, spending a long succession of days in just sidling about to see sights for much of the time, and rambling through the Isle of Wight the rest of it,—having exceeded, by at least an entire month the time you had intended when you left home—having three or four times over told the people there that you were on the point of returning; having not even *read* what would turn to sixpenny-worth of account—and having become, even weeks since, desperately ashamed of your course of life—in such a predicament you would be *forced* to say, “No, much as I should like to see my good old friends, I must not and cannot, for shame, take such a new licence for dissipation; the pleasure of the interview would be interfered with by the consciousness that I had no business to be there.”

. . . . I should have delayed coming hither till after the bustling season but for the unpleasant cause of coming at all,—my anxiety to obtain professional advice for some morbid symptom on my only remaining *ear* (the other having declined its office many years since). My apprehension of more than the possibility of wholly losing the services of the one that has remained faithful hitherto, and by which I have continued to get on tolerably for the last

dozen years, is much alleviated by an assurance from the highest professional authority that there is *not* serious cause for such apprehension.

. . . . The removal of your brother to a scene and a condition of existence how transcendently different ! excited a pensive emotion in those of us who had seen him excited and animated in a social hour, even while confined to his bed. But another feeling mingled and even predominated—that which congratulated him in thought on his blessed exchange. In attending his quiet funeral (just such a one as I should wish for myself), I thought of the difference between such a close of life, such a calm affectionate conveyance of the remains to the grave, and *such a sequel elsewhere*, as compared with the death and pompous obsequies of some wicked proud monarch or conqueror.

. . . . It is odd I should not till now have been reminded of *political* matters. Sad state of things,—to result, at no distant time, according to the auguries I am in the way of hearing, in great and perhaps terrific national calamity. No doubt God has a fearful controversy with a nation on the whole so irreligious and so immoral; and the infliction of a bad government bears strongly the marks of vengeance.

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#### CCXVIII. TO THE EDITOR.

*London, July 20, 1841.*

. . . . Once landed in Northampton, I might not be as much disposed as I ought to put myself speedily in motion homeward. I can imagine strong *anti-movement* feelings and influences, quite additional to your friendly disposition to induce a longer stay.

I will confess too, that the inconvenience of travelling by changed routes, brings all my sedentary and old man's feelings very strongly in favour of the one single run of a few hours.

This same marvellous facility renders it very much less unlikely than it would otherwise have been, that I may be here again at no very distant time, supposing even a short

prolongation of life, in tolerable health. But for this grand achievement of science and energy, I might have deemed it little likely I should ever see London again—unless obliged by a necessity of the same kind as that which brought me hither. This *may* recur, though professional judgment seems to allow me to hope not. But where there is something confessedly, though not ominously wrong, one cannot feel an assurance that it may not become *more* wrong. As yet there is no interference with the performance of the proper function of the “peccant part,” nor any actual inconvenience.

. . . . Besides the variety of sights, exhibitions, &c., to which I have paid a competent attention, I have necessarily become a little acquainted with some matters and things not unreservedly let out through the general public channels, snatches of secret history, political intrigue, electioneering tactics, characters and anecdotes of considerable personages, &c. &c. The general effect of such information is, that the state of society is bad—bad beyond any thing that even a cynical judge of human nature would antecedently surmise. A total want of moral principle in the vast majority of figuring persons is a very sad phenomenon. This is proved against one after another of them, even of some that one might have been disposed to think moderately well of. A minor arraignment is, that of all sorts of perversity, folly, and absurdity, of opinion and prejudice. And Religion! there might be no such thing recognized as in existence, except as an object of jeering reference as embodied in a church and parsons. When I say “jeering,” I speak of the clever fellows of the “liberal” party, some of them in parliament, others the journalists, the literary adventurers, political economists, &c. A life spent much in the company of this sort of people would be very injurious to a man’s personal religion. I have seen but few of them: but I suppose some fair samples.

. . . . In the first triumph of having obtained the Reform Bill what augur would not have been scouted as an idiot who had predicted that ten years of its operation would end in such an *election* as this!

I hope I shall be just able, after such an interval, to recognize the countenances of our few Bristol friends when I

meet them again. I am saying "few;"—to me how *very* few, after the removals by death, and that gradual declining out of society, which has of late years been increasing my insulation. I earnestly wish that my diminishing communication with men may be replaced by more communication with Heaven.

Still, and again, and ever, wishing every blessing that such an imperfect state as this mortal sojourn must ever be, can admit to yourself and Mrs. R.,

I remain, my dear sir, most truly yours,

J. FOSTER.

CCXIX. TO THE REV. EDWARD WHITE.

[In answer to one in which he stated his inquiries and difficulties on the subject of the eternity of future punishments.]

*September 24, 1841.*

DEAR SIR,—If you could have been apprised how much less research I have made into what has been written on the subject of your letter than you appear to have done, you would have had little expectation of assistance in deciding your judgment. I have perhaps been too content to let an opinion (or impression) admitted in early life dispense with protracted inquiry and various reading. The general, not very far short of universal, judgment of divines in affirmation of the doctrine of eternal punishment must be acknowledged a weighty consideration. It is a very fair question, Is it likely that so many thousands of able, learned, benevolent, and pious men should all have been in error? And the language of Scripture is formidably strong; so strong that it must be an argument of extreme cogency that would authorize a limited interpretation.\*

\* On the subject of this letter, it may be interesting to reflective readers to compare Mr. Foster's views with those of his two distinguished contemporaries, Hall and Chalmers. The following extracts (whatever estimate may be formed of their argumentative force) are beautifully characteristic of their respective writers, and equally remote from the dogmatism and flippancy which are so often displayed by inferior minds.

"For my own part, I acquiesce in the usual and popular interpreta-

Nevertheless, I acknowledge myself *not* convinced of the orthodox doctrine. If asked, *why* not?—I should have little to say in the way of criticism, of implications found

tion of the passages which treat on the future doom of the finally impenitent. My reasons in brief, are as follows:—I assume it as a maxim, that we are utterly incompetent to determine, *a priori*, what is the amount of guilt incurred by such as reject the overtures of the gospel, and further than God has been pleased to make it the subject of express revelation; that the terms expressive of the duration of future misery are as forcible as the Greek language supplies; that the same term is applied to the duration of misery as to the duration of happiness, or even the eternity of God himself (Matt. xxv. 46; Rev. xix. 3); that the exclusion of the impenitent from happiness is asserted in the most positive terms—‘They shall *not* see life,’ &c., &c.; that ‘their worm dieth *not*, and their fire is *not* extinguished;’ that positive terms may be understood in different degrees of latitude, but this is impossible respecting negative terms, since a negation admits of no degrees.

“If the eternal misery of a certain number can be rendered conducive to a greater amount of good, in relation to the universe at large, than any other plan of action, then the attribute of goodness requires it; for I take it for granted, that the Supreme Being will adopt that scheme, whatever it be, which will produce the greatest quantity of happiness on the whole. But our faculties are too limited, and our knowledge of the laws of the moral world, and of the relation which one part of the universe bears to another too imperfect, to enable us to say that this is impossible. For aught we know, therefore, the existence of eternal misery may not only consist with, but be the necessary effect of supreme goodness. At all events, it is a subject of pure revelation, on the interpretation of which every one must be left to form his own judgment. If the milder interpretation can be sustained by a preponderating evidence, I shall most sincerely rejoice; but I have yet seen nothing to satisfy me that this is the case.

“I would only add, that in my humble opinion, the doctrine of the eternal duration of future misery, metaphysically considered, is not an essential article of faith, nor is the belief of it ever proposed as a term of salvation; that, if we really flee from the wrath to come, by truly repenting of our sins, and laying hold of the mercy of God through Christ by a lively faith, our salvation is perfectly secure, whichever hypothesis we embrace on this most mysterious subject. The evidence accompanying the popular interpretation is by no means to be compared to that which establishes our common Christianity, and therefore the fate of the Christian religion is not to be considered as implicated in the belief or disbelief of the popular doctrine.”—ROBERT HALL (*Letter to a Gentleman at Trinity College, Cambridge*), Works, v. 527.

“On the subject of the eternity of future punishment I do not want you to hold with me the language of a stern dogmatist; but sure I am that the cause of practical religion will suffer greatly in your hands, if you gloss over or reduce the plain literalities of scripture on the awful question. We cannot hesitate a moment as to what the distinct understanding of every plain unsophisticated man must be in regard to the sense and doctrine of

or sought in what may be called incidental expressions of Scripture, or of the passages dubiously cited in favour of final, universal restitution. It is the moral argument, as it may be named, that presses irresistibly on my mind—that which comes in the stupendous idea of eternity.

It appears to me that the teachers and believers of the orthodox doctrine hardly ever make an earnest, strenuous effort to form a conception of eternity; or rather a conception somewhat of the nature of a faint incipient approximation. Because it is confessedly beyond the compass of thought, it is suffered to go without an attempt at thinking of it. They utter the term in the easy currency of language; have a vague and transitory idea of something obscurely vast, and do not labour to place and detain the

the bible on the matter at issue. There can be no misconceiving that; and without repeating its affirmations, I must say, that once you extenuate and dilute them, you inflict a blow on practical religion of which perhaps you are not aware. . . . The scripture gives us no warrant to believe that our all is not staked, and irrevocably staked, on the faith and obedience of the present life. Be assured you will paralyze all the motives to practical Christianity by giving any countenance to the opposite representation, and you will not only indulge in unlicensed speculation, by attempting to dilute and do away the obvious literalities of scripture on this subject, but you will find it a speculation of most baleful influence on the practice and the general principles of all who are infected by it.

“ . . . . Let me briefly, and in but one or two sentences, advert to what I hold an important view connected with this matter. When men talk of the disproportion between the sins of an ephemeral life and the penalties of a never-ending eternity, it should be recollected that this is really not the light in which the matter ought to be regarded. There is a law of habit exemplified within the field of every man's observation, and which he does not quarrel with. In virtue of this law, by every act of obedience, a man becomes stronger in the purpose and character of obedience; and by every act of wickedness, the propensities of wickedness lord it all the more strongly and resistlessly over him. Now just imagine the continuity of this process to be kept up between time and eternity, and that if we carry with us unreclaimed impiety and disobedience across the limit which separates the two worlds, we shall carry with us into our future state, the habits and the passions, and all the vitiated principles of rebellion against God; and the punishments which come on the back of these will not be punishments for the sins of the present life, but fresh punishments for the fresh sins to which the inveteracy of our diseased moral nature is ever hurrying us—an inveteracy only to be cured on this side of death, and so affording a most impressive argument for our strenuous, and withal, our immediate repentance.”—DR. CHALMERS, *Notes on Hill's Lectures on Divinity. Posthumous Works*, vol. ix. p. 416—418.

mind in intense protracted contemplation, seeking all expedients for expanding and aggravating the awful import of such a word. Though every mode of illustration is feeble and impotent, one would surely think there would be an insuppressible impulse to send forth the thoughts to the utmost possible reach into the immensity—when it is an immensity into which our own most essential interests are infinitely extended. Truly it *is* very strange that even religious minds can keep so quietly aloof from the amazing, the overwhelming contemplation of what they have the destiny and the near prospect of entering upon.

Expedients of illustration of what eternity is *not*, supply the best attainable means of assisting remotely toward a glimmering apprehension of what it *is*. All that is within human capacity is to imagine the vastest measures of *time*, and to look to the termination of these as only touching the mere commencement of eternity.

For example:—It has been suggested\* to imagine the number of particles, atoms, contained in this globe, and suppose them one by one annihilated, each in a thousand years, till all were gone; but just as well say, a million, or a million of millions of years or ages, it is all the same, as against infinite duration.

Extend the thought of such a process to our whole mundane system, and finally to the whole material universe: it is still the same. Or, imagine a series of numerical figures, in close order, extended to a line of such a length that it would encircle the globe, like the equator—or that would run along with the earth's orbit round the sun—or with the outermost planet, Uranus—or that would draw a circle of which the radius should be from the earth or sun to Sirius—or that should encompass the entire material universe, which, as being material, cannot be infinite. The most stupendous of these measures of time would have an end; and would, when completed, be still *nothing to eternity*.

Now think of an infliction of misery protracted through such a period, and at the end of it being only *commencing*,—not one smallest step nearer a conclusion:—the case just the same if that sum of figures were multiplied by itself. And then think of *Man*—his nature, his situation, the cir-

\* In the Spectator I think. (No. 575, *Monday, Aug. 2, 1714*.—Ed.)

cumstances of his brief sojourn and trial on earth. Far be it from us to make light of the demerit of sin, and to remonstrate with the Supreme Judge against a severe chastisement, of whatever moral nature we may regard the infliction to be. But still, what is man?—He comes into the world with a nature fatally corrupt, and powerfully tending to actual evil. He comes among a crowd of temptations adapted to his innate evil propensities. He grows up (incomparably the greater proportion of the race) in great ignorance; his judgment weak, and under numberless beguilements into error; while his passions and appetites are strong; his conscience unequally matched against their power;—in the majority of men, but feebly and rudely constituted. The influence of whatever good instructions he may receive is counteracted by a combination of opposite influences almost constantly acting on him. He is essentially and inevitably unapt to be powerfully acted on by what is invisible and future. In addition to all which, there is the intervention and activity of the great tempter and destroyer. In short, his condition is such that there is no hope of him, but from a direct special operation on him, of what we denominate Divine Grace.—*Is it not so? are we not convinced—is it not the plain doctrine of scripture—is there not irresistible evidence from a view of the actual condition of the human world,—that no man can become good, in the Christian sense, can become fit for a holy and happy place hereafter, but by this operation *ab extra*?* But this is arbitrary and discriminative on the part of the Sovereign Agent, and independent of the will of man. And how awfully evident is it, that this indispensable operation takes place only on a comparatively small proportion of the collective race!

Now this creature, thus constituted and circumstanced, passes a few fleeting years on earth, a short sinful course; in which he does often what, notwithstanding his ignorance and ill-disciplined judgment and conscience, he knows to be wrong, and neglects what he knows to be his duty; and consequently, for a greater or less measure of guilt, widely different in different offenders, deserves punishment. But endless punishment! hopeless misery, through a duration to which the enormous terms above imagined, will be abso-



lutely nothing! I acknowledge my inability (I would say it reverently) to admit this belief, together with a belief in the Divine Goodness—the belief that “God is love,” that his tender mercies are over all his works. Goodness, benevolence, charity, as ascribed in supreme perfection to Him, cannot mean a quality foreign to all human conceptions of goodness; it must be something analogous in principle to what himself has defined and required as goodness in his moral creatures, that, in adoring the Divine Goodness, we may not be worshipping an “unknown God.” But if so, how would all our ideas be confounded, while contemplating him bringing, of his own sovereign will, a race of creatures into existence, in such a condition that they certainly will and must,—*must*, by their nature and circumstances, go wrong and be miserable, unless prevented by especial grace,—which is the privilege of only a small proportion of them, and, at the same time, affixing on their delinquency a doom, of which it is infinitely beyond the highest archangel’s faculty to apprehend a thousandth part of the horror.

It must be in deep humility that we venture to apply to the measures of the Divine Government, the rules indispensable to the equity of human administration. Yet we may advert to the principle in human legislation, that the man tempted to crime should, as far as is possible without actual experience, be apprised of the nature and measure of the penal consequence. It should be something, the main force of which can be placed in intelligible *opposition*, so to speak, to the temptation. If it be something totally out of the scope of his faculties to apprehend, to realize to his mind, that *threatened something is unknown*, has not its appropriate fitness to deter him. There is, or may be, in it what would be of mighty force to deter him *if he could have a competent notion of it*; but his necessary ignorance precludes from him that salutary force. Is he not thus taken at a fearful disadvantage? As a motive to deter him the threatened penalty can only be in the proportion to his (in the present case) narrow faculty of apprehending it; but as an evil to be suffered it surpasses in magnitude every intellect but the Omniscient. Might we not imagine the reflection of one of the condemned delinquents suffering on, and

still interminably on, through a thousand or a million of ages, to be expressed in some such manner as this:—Oh! if it had been possible for me to conceive but the most diminutive part of the weight and horror of this doom, every temptation to sin would have been enough to strike me dead with terror; I should have shrunk from it with the most violent recoil.

A common argument has been that sin is an *infinite evil*, that is, of infinite demerit, as an offence against an infinite Being; and that since a finite creature cannot suffer infinitely *in measure*, he must *in duration*. But surely, in all reason, the limited and in the present instance *diminutive nature of the criminal* must be an essential part of the case for judgment. Every act must, for one of its proportions, be measured by the nature and condition of the agent. And it would seem that one principle in that rule of proportion should be, that the offending agent should be capable of being aware of the magnitude (the *amount*, if we might use such a word) of the offence he commits, by being capable of something like an adequate conception of the being against whom it is committed. A perverse child, committing an offence against a great monarch, of whose dignity it *had some*, but a vastly inadequate, apprehension, would not be punished in the same manner as an offender of high endowments and responsibility, and fully aware of the dignity of the personage offended. The one would justly be sharply chastised; the other might as justly be condemned to death. In the present case, the offender does or may know, that the Being offended against is of awful majesty; and, therefore, the offence is one of great aggravation, and he will justly be punished with great severity; but, by his extremely contracted and feeble faculties, as the lowest in the scale of strictly rational and accountable creatures in the whole creation, he is infinitely incapable of any adequate conception of the greatness of the Being offended against. He is, then, according to the argument, obnoxious to a punishment not in any proportion to his own nature, but alone to that infinity of the Supreme Nature, which is to him infinitely unconceivable and unknown.

If an evil act of a human being may be of infinite demerit,

why may not a good one be of infinite excellence or merit as having also a reference to the infinite Being? Is it not plain that every act of a finite nature must have, in all senses, the finite quality of that nature—cannot, therefore, be of infinite demerit?

Can we,—I would say with reverence—can we realize it as possible that a lost soul, after countless millions of ages, and in prospect of an interminable succession of such enormous periods, can be made to have the conviction, absolute and perfect, that all this is a just, an equitable, infliction, and from a power as *good* as he is just, for a few short sinful years on earth—years and sins presumed to be retained most vividly in memory, and everlastingly growing clearer, vaster, and more terrible to retrospective view in their magnitude of infinite evil—every stupendous period of duration, by which they have actually been left at a distance, seeming to bring them, in contrariety to all laws of memory, nearer and ever nearer to view, by the continually aggravated experience of their consequences?

Yes, those twenty, forty, seventy years, growing up to infinity of horror, in the review, in proportion to the distance which the condemned spirit recedes from them;—all eternity not sufficing to reveal fully what those years contained!—millions of ages for each single evil thought or word.

But it is usually alleged that there will be an endless *continuance* of sinning, with probably an endless aggravation, and *therefore* the punishment must be endless. Is not this like an admission of disproportion between the punishment and the *original cause* of its infliction?—But suppose the case to be so—that is to say, that the punishment is not a retribution *simply* for the guilt of the momentary existence on earth, but a continued punishment of the continued, ever-aggravated guilt in the eternal state; the allegation is of no avail in vindication of the doctrine; because the first consignment to the dreadful state *necessitates a continuance of the criminality*; the doctrine teaching that it is of the essence, and is an awful aggravation, of the original consignment, that it dooms the condemned to maintain the criminal spirit unchanged for ever. The doom to *sin* as well as suffer, and, according to the argument, to

sin in *order* to suffer, is inflicted as the punishment of the sin committed in the mortal state. Virtually, therefore, the eternal punishment is the punishment of the sins of time.

Under the light (or the darkness) of this doctrine, how inconceivably mysterious and awful is the aspect of the whole economy of this human world! The immensely greater number of the race hitherto, through all ages and regions, passing a short life under no illuminating, transforming influence of their Creator; ninety-nine in a hundred of them perhaps having never even received any authenticated message from Heaven; passing off the world in a state unfit for a spiritual, heavenly, and happy kingdom elsewhere; and all destined to everlasting misery.—The thoughtful spirit has a question silently suggested to it of far more emphatic import than that of him who exclaimed, “*Hast thou made all men in vain?*”

Even the dispensation of redemption by the Mediator, the only light that shines through this dark economy,—how profoundly mysterious in its slow progress, as yet, in its uncorrupted purity, and saving efficacy. What proportion of the earth’s inhabitants are, at this hour, the subjects of its vital agency? It was not the Divine volition that the success should be greater—that a greater number should be saved by it,—or most certainly, most necessarily, its efficacy *would* have been greater. But in thus withholding from so large a proportion of mankind even the knowledge, and from so vast a majority in the nominally Christian nations the Divine application, indispensable to the efficacy of the Christian dispensation, could it be that the Divine purpose was, to consign so many of his creatures, existing under such fearful circumstances, to the doom of eternal misery? Does the belief consist with any conception we can form of infinite goodness combined with infinite power?

But, after all this, we have to meet the grave question, *What say the Scriptures?* There is a force in their expressions at which we well may tremble. On *no* allowable interpretation do they signify less than a very protracted duration and a formidable severity. But I hope it is not presumptuous to take advantage of the fact, that the terms everlasting, eternal, forever, original or translated, are often

employed in the Bible, as well as other writings under great and various limitations of import ; and are thus withdrawn from the predicament of *necessarily and absolutely* meaning a strictly endless duration. The limitation is often, indeed, plainly marked by the nature of the subject. In other instances the words are used with a figurative indefiniteness, which leaves the limitation to be made by some general rule of reason and proportion. They are designed to magnify, to aggravate, rather than to define. My resource in the present case, then, is simply this—that since the terms do not necessarily and absolutely signify an interminable duration, and since there is in the present instance to be pleaded, for admitting a limited interpretation, a reason in the moral estimate of things, of stupendous, of infinite urgency, involving our conceptions of the divine goodness and equity, and leaving those conceptions overwhelmed in darkness and horror if it be rejected, I therefore conclude that a limited interpretation is authorized. Perhaps there is some pertinence in a suggestion which I recollect to have seen in some old and nearly unknown book in favour of universal restitution ;—that the great difference of *degrees* of future punishment, so plainly stated in Scripture, affords an argument against its perpetuity ; since, if the demerit be infinite, there can be no place for a scale of degrees, apportioning a minor infliction to some offenders ;—every one should be punished up to the utmost that his nature can sustain ; and the same reason of equity there may be for a limited measure, there may consistently be for a limited duration. The assignment of an unlimited duration would seem an abandonment of the *principle* of the discriminating rule observed in the adjustment of degrees.

If it be asked, *how could* the doctrine have been more plainly and positively asserted than it is in the Scripture language ? In answer, I ask, How do *we* construct our words and sentences to express it in an absolute manner, so as to leave no *possibility* of understanding the language in a different, equivocal, or questionable sense ? And may we not think that if so transcendently dreadful a doctrine had been meant to be stamped as in burning characters on our faith, there would have been such forms of proposition,

of circumlocution if necessary, as would have rendered all doubt or question a mere palpable absurdity ?

Some intelligent and devout inquirers, unable to admit the terrific doctrine, and yet pressed by the strength of the scripture *language*, have had recourse to a *literal* interpretation of the threatened destruction, the eternal death, as signifying *annihilation of existence*, after a more or less protracted penal infliction. Even this would be a prodigious relief: but it is an admission that the terms in question *do* mean something final, in an absolute sense. I have not directed much thought to this point; the grand object of interest being a negation of the perpetuity of misery. I have not been anxious for any satisfaction beyond *that*; though certainly one would wish to indulge the hope, founded on the Divine attribute of infinite benevolence, that there will be a period somewhere in the endless futurity, when all God's sinning creatures will be restored by him to rectitude and happiness.

It often surprises me that the fearful doctrine sits, if I may so express it, so easy on the minds of the religious and benevolent believers of it. Surrounded immediately by the multitudes of fellow mortals, and looking abroad on the present, and back on the past state of the race, and regarding them, as to the immense majority, as subjects of so direful destination, how *can* they have any calm enjoyment of life, how can they ever be cordially cheerful, how can they escape the incessant haunting of dismal ideas, darkening the economy in which their lot is cast? I remember suggesting to one of them such an image as this:—suppose the case that so many of the great surrounding population as he could not, even in a judgment of charity, believe to be Christians, that is, to be in a safe state for hereafter,—suppose the case to be that he knew so many were all doomed to suffer, by penal infliction, a death by torture, in the most protracted agony, with what feelings would he look on the populous city, the swarming country, or even a crowded, mixed congregation? But what an infinitesimal trifle that would be in comparison with what he does believe in looking on these multitudes. How, then, can they bear the sight of the living world around them?

As to religious teachers; if the tremendous doctrine be

true, surely it ought to be almost continually proclaimed as with the blast of a trumpet, inculcated and reiterated, with ardent passion, in every possible form of terrible illustration; no remission of the alarm to thoughtless spirits. What! believe them in such inconceivably dreadful peril, and not multiply and aggravate the terrors to frighten them out of their stupor; deploring still, that all the horrifying representations in the power of thought and language to make, are immeasurably below the real urgency of the subject; and almost wishing that some appalling phenomenon of sight or sound might break in to make the impression that no words can make? If we saw a fellow mortal stepping heedlessly or daringly on the utmost verge of some dreadful precipice or gulf, a humane spectator would raise and *continue* a shout, a scream, to prevent him. How then can it comport with the duty of preachers to satisfy themselves with brief, occasional references to this awful topic, when the most prolonged thundering alarm is but as the note of an infant, a bird, or an insect, in proportion to the horrible urgency of the case?

There has been, in some quarters, what appears to me a miserably fallacious way of talking, which affects to dissuade from dwelling on such terrifying representations. They have said, These terrors tend only to harden the mind; approach the thoughtless beings rather, and almost exclusively, with the milder suasives, the gentle language of love. I cannot, of course, *mean* to say, that this also is not to be one of the expedients and of frequent application. But I do say, that to make this the main resource is not in consistency with the spirit of the bible, in which the larger proportion of what is said of sinners and addressed to them, *is plainly in the tone of menace and alarm*. Strange if it had been otherwise, when a righteous Governor was speaking to a depraved, rebellious race. Also it is matter of fact and experience, that it is very far oftener by impressions on fear that men are actually awakened to flee from the wrath to come. Let any one recall what he has known of such awakenings. Dr. Watts, all mild and amiable as he was, and delighted to dwell on the congenial topics, says deliberately, that of all the persons to whom his ministry had been efficacious, *only one* had received the first effectual impressions from the gentle and attractive aspects of religion;

all the rest from the awful and alarming ones—the appeals to fear. And this is all but universally the manner of the Divine process of conversion.

A number (not large, but of great piety and intelligence) of ministers within my acquaintance, several now dead, have been disbelievers of the doctrine in question; at the same time not feeling themselves imperatively called upon to make a public disavowal; content with employing in their ministrations strong general terms in denouncing the doom of impenitent sinners. For one thing, a consideration of the unreasonable imputations, and unmeasured suspicions apt to be cast on any publicly declared partial defection from rigid orthodoxy, has made them think they should better consult their usefulness by not giving a prominence to this dissentient point; while yet they make no concealment of it in private communications, and in answer to serious inquiries. When, besides, they have considered how strangely defective and feeble is the efficacy, to alarm and deter careless, irreligious minds, of the terrible doctrine itself notionally admitted by them, they have thought themselves the less required to propound one that so greatly qualifies the blackness of the prospect. They could not be unaware of the grievous truth of what is so strongly insisted on as an argument by the defenders of the tenet,—that thoughtless and wicked men would be sure to seize on the mitigated doctrine to encourage themselves in their impenitence. But this is only the same perverse and fatal use that they make of the doctrine of grace and mercy through Jesus Christ. If they *will* so abuse the truth we cannot help it.—But methinks even this fact tells against the doctrine in question. If the very nature of man, as created, every individual, by the Sovereign Power, be in such desperate disorder that there is no possibility of conversion and salvation except in the instances where that Power interposes with a special and redeeming efficacy, how can we conceive that the main proportion of the race thus morally impotent (that is really and absolutely impotent) will be eternally punished for the inevitable result of this moral impotence? But this I have said before.\*

\* “I wish that my friend Mr. Foster could have adjourned some of the difficulties which exercised him to the day when all things shall be made



CCXX. TO J. COTTLE, ESQ.

*Stapleton, Tuesday, January, 1842.*

I am not pleased with myself for not having, long since, sent a line of grateful acknowledgment to you and Mrs. Hare, for one kind favour following another. I am afraid an extra lazy habit will have been superinduced by several weeks of lying nearly all the time in bed. If I had had any urgent business or vocation I should not have been allowed to delay till within a few days back the practice of rising soon after breakfast. In making any trial of myself, in any way of exertion, I suppose the proof of my not having risen yet to the accustomed level would be a failure of strength. Otherwise I feel nearly what we denominate *well*. . . . All about me have been most assiduously kind; and a friend's daughter, who has been with us all the while, and can read on interminably without physical injury or uneasiness (which my girls cannot) has read through I know not how many volumes to me.

In returning toward the accustomed mode of life, the question will be how soon to leave the confinement to one warm room for the other parts of the house,—and the open air without the house. The winter is an untoward season for such experiment—the latter experiment. But while I am writing “winter,” a warm splendid sunshine is falling over my table and room, giving a pleasing intimation of spring not very far off.

How many returning springs you and I have seen, how few more, at the very utmost, shall we stay to see! There is a land where, in a much higher sense, “everlasting spring abides, and never-withering flowers.” May almighty grace work and refine our souls to a fitness for that happy region of our Father and our Redeemer's kingdom.

This time of confinement has been to me one of very serious exercise of mind. A deep sense of guilt has

manifest. I greatly wish that he could have restrained his speculation on the duration of future punishment, and acquiesced in the obvious language, or at least the obvious practical lesson and purpose of scripture upon this question—which was to cut off every pretext of postponing the care of their eternity from this world, and to press home on every unsophisticated reader of his bible the dread alternative of—now or never.”—DR. CHALMERS, *Sabbath Scripture Readings*, vol. i. p. 416.

attended the review of life,—a life so very, very imperfectly devoted to our Great Master's service. So much lukewarmness, so little zealous service, so much indolent self-indulgence. I have profoundly felt how sad and hopeless a condition but for that blessed and all-sufficient resource, the atonement accomplished by Him who offered himself without spot to God.—I cannot comprehend the *fortitude* with which, under a rejection of this our only hope, a conscious sinner can dare to look forward to hereafter. I have been highly gratified to hear favourable accounts of your health, as being in some respects, especially your eyes, better than in past years. How little, at some seasons, did you anticipate staying so long in this world. Wise is the Sovereign appointment, for those who stay, and—for those who go.

My thoughts are often pensively turning on the enumeration of those I may call my coevals, and many of them of long acquaintance, who have been called away within a very few years. An old and much valued friend at Worcester, from whose funeral I returned little more than in time to attend that of our estimable Mr. Hare. Since then, your excellent sister,—Mr. Coles of Bourton, known and esteemed almost forty years,—Mr. Addington,—lately, in Scotland, the worthy Mr. Dove,—and now last of all, and so unexpectedly, Mr. Roberts. . . .

CCXXI. TO THE REV. T. GRINFIELD, M.A.

*Stapleton, February 19, 1842.*

I have cause to be highly gratified by the friendly *manœuvre* devised to put me in possession of the view of Snowdon. It is less *faded* than your description had led me to surmise. There appears to be no obliteration of even the finest lines, not even those slight ones, denominated *interlines*, traced between the stronger cuts of the graver. . . . I add this print with great pleasure, both for its own and the friendly giver's sake, to my accumulation of *Woollett's*, numbering to about fifty, and including very nearly all his engravings. I need not say that this has been the consequence of *mousing* for them during a good many years,—watching and

catching the occurrence of any of them, within my very narrow local sphere of such opportunities. The superlative excellence of *Woollett's* workmanship seemed to warrant this sort of avarice.

But for this, and the other large accumulations, how many times I have called myself a *fool*!—money expended, to an excess beyond all sober prudence in a person of my very limited means—liability to damage, from careless handling, mildew, &c., &c. . . . Thank you for this well-engraved portrait of Wilson. I have not seen it before. I have a good portrait of Woollett, to place it beside. Never were two artists more fortunate in each other. . . .

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## CCXXII. TO JOHN PURSER, ESQ.

*Stapleton, Feb. 22, 1842.*

. . . . When it is considered that the object (in theory) of government is the prevention and castigation of iniquity, it is striking and melancholy to see how much of that very iniquity may go into the manner of constituting and administering that same government. For example, the recent Dublin election. There cannot be one right-thinking virtuous man in England whose blood has not almost boiled at the account of the complicated villainies of that business. . . . But that we have a Parliament, for a very large part of it, got together very much by the same sort of means, one should be confident that so vile a job will be flung over. . . .

. . . . In my retired life here I see extremely few persons who are under the full excitement of the present great national interests, because I see very few persons of any sort; but intelligence of the wide and deep agitation pours in through every channel; would it might become such an earthquake as to overturn and prostrate the hateful domination with which the nation is cursed. The aristocratic ascendancy care nothing for the destitution and misery under which so vast a number of human beings are sinking to the dust, literally to the grave; their own selfish advantages held fast while they see the national resources fast

draining away; and the last power of effrontery asserting that their monopoly is not at all, or only in a trifling degree, the cause of that ruin of commerce which is depriving hundreds of thousands of the means of exercising their industry in order to live, and millions of the means of living otherwise than in the most abject penury.

We are not now, like the ancient Jews, living under a dispensation of special providences, manifested often in speedy vindictive visitation on oppressors of the poor; but one can hardly help thinking that some strong mark of the Divine judgment will yet fall, in this life, on at least the chiefs in this iniquity. And in such an event, very slowly will compassion be drawn toward any calamity that may be inflicted on them. "They shall have judgment without mercy who have showed no mercy." The case with them is, not only that they are rolling and rioting in wealth and luxury *while* a vast multitude are sinking to the lowest depth of penury and misery, but that they obstinately and scornfully maintain, as a chief expedient for that wealth and luxury, the very thing which is a chief cause of that deep and wide, and still widening misery. Ireland has heretofore been the first in our thoughts and references as a scene of popular wretchedness; but now the most immediate and engrossing spectacle glares upon us in England. Yet I have not forgotten M. De Beaumont's description of Ireland, and estimate of its odious and incorrigible aristocracy.

What a contrast to the moral aspect of Ireland, is its natural scenery, so abundant and various in all that is beautiful and grand. We have been reading with great pleasure (as to this *latter* view of the country) the successive numbers of Mr. and Mrs. Hall's traverse of your island, a pleasure, suffering, as in all such cases, the drawback of considering the difference between reading and actually seeing. A few, very few of the remarkable places, indeed, I have the remembrance of having seen—as, the Hill of Howth, the Dargle, the Glen of the Downs, the Devil's Glen; and the general appearance of the Wicklow mountains. You may perhaps hardly recollect to have heard that once your excellent father, H. Strahan, and myself, made an excursion on foot to some of those romantic places, with an

exertion of bodily strength how far beyond any thing I could perform now!

I hope you do not yet feel a very marked decline in this same "natural force," though the troop of stout fellows and fine girls around you or belonging to you, may, if there were no other memento, remind you that the green age is far gone away. One can very seldom congratulate, without much deduction and reserve, the father of a numerous grown up and nearly grown up family. Yours appears to be the remarkable and felicitous case in which there needs no such reserve, and most cordially do I rejoice with you that it is so.

For at least fifty years, I have never been confined to bed for a single day, till within the last two months, during the greater part of which I have been confined to a room, and for a considerable number of days, nearly to bed, by a cold and cough of a very severe and obstinate kind. I have now very nearly regained my usual health, and am only waiting for a warm day to venture out of the house—just such a day as I have never forgotten, a first of January in Dublin, in I wonder what far off year of the time for ever gone, I walked on the quays in a warm delightful sunshine.

I may guess that neither you nor Mrs. P. are much in the habit of "taking walks" for walking's sake. If you ever do so, which of the two has the advantage in point of physical strength? How much I should like to be the third in an amble by the Grand Canal—or, on any other path or ground. . . . .

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CCXXIII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, May, 1842.*

. . . . . Another house, which I have frequented many years, is finally closed against me. You have heard mention of Mr. Wade, near the Hotwells, Coleridge's friend. I attended his funeral on Monday morning. He had been as well as usual a fortnight before; but walked a great deal on one of the hottest days, sometimes with his hat off, as he often did. The consequence was a severe illness, which the medical man (whom he would not for several days

admit) pronounced from the time he saw him, fatal. For nearly a week I heard nothing of it. And when I went to see him, he was evidently near death, which took place two or three days after. He was in a state of stupor, and unable to speak. I thought he recognized me just for a moment; as indicated by a slight transient smile. I do not remember how or when I became acquainted with him, many years since. I had always found him extremely kind and hospitable. For years I had dined with him about once a month, usually in the company of Roberts, to whom he had been a faithful friend, and an attendant on his ministry. A few months before his death he made me a present of a very splendid set of engravings, which had cost him thirty pounds. His age was eighty-one. He was not a literary, nor, properly speaking, an intellectual man; it having been from mere generous good-will to a man floating loose on society that he had, some forty years since, put his house and purse at the free service of Coleridge, and partly his associates. He was wholly a man of business all his life, till he retired about a dozen years since. He did not make, formally, what we denominate a profession of religion; but there were favourable indications in the manner in which he expressed himself in his illness. I am not quite self-satisfied for not having sometimes more expressly introduced religion in our conversations. They turned most on that various knowledge of the world which his long and diversified experience of it supplied. On his strict uniform integrity I never heard a syllable of imputation or doubt.—Reckoning up lately, I found him to be the eleventh individual of old acquaintance carried off within the last three years and a half, several of them beyond my own age, the others not many years short of it; so that there remain actually but three or four of you that are about my coevals. . . . . Emphatically admonition upon admonition to prepare for the removal. . . . .

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CCXXIV. TO THE REV. DR. HARRIS.

*Stapleton, September 13, 1842.*

In apology for so long a delay in acknowledging your valuable and elegant present of "The Great Commission," I have to plead, partly as an effect of the intense heat, and partly as a consequence of a debilitating indisposition, a state of my eyes extremely inconvenient for reading and writing. Certainly I ought to have immediately informed you of the safe conveyance of the book, leaving it to a future time to take the liberty of making any slight observations, if there should occur to me any such as I could think at all worth your attention. But I indolently let myself be assured that you would not suspect any failure in the conveyance.

I only say what I have said to every one with whom I have spoken of the book, when I express my admiration of the eloquence, the comprehension, the inexhaustible invention, the power of turning to account both invention and knowledge, and the energy and general precision of language.

If I might venture any hint on a lower key, it would perhaps be,—a tendency to diffuseness, or call it amplification, exuberance. The writer luxuriates in his opulence, sometimes diluting a little the effect which a little more brevity and compression might have sooner and more simply produced. Not that, if I were asked to note any parts or passages better omitted, I should know where to point; it is all to the purpose, only I may fancy that a somewhat less multifarious assemblage of ideas would converge more pointedly to that purpose.

A reviewer, I remember, wished that the introductory section, the philosophical speculation, had been omitted. I should hardly say so; it is very curious, and clearly stated and illustrated; though not indispensably necessary to the main object. Philosophy does go into a startling theory of the far-spreading, complicated, interminable succession of effects, both in the physical and moral constitution of the world; making every thing and all things perpetually operative, as both effects and causes, to the end of time, and immeasurably into space. Proximate dependences and

sequences are obvious and important. And it may be assumed that effects of great moment may come some where hereafter, in the long concatenation and wide ramification; proceeding as consequences from what may now seem trivial things. But no man will *practically* believe the theory in the unlimited terms of its exposition. No man will realize to himself or care to think, that the present state of his mind is the result of millions of agencies, brought down upon him in strict succession of cause and effect; or will hold himself under any responsibility for the future millions to follow and operate somewhere, sometime, from every thing he does or says. A curious paragraph is quoted from Babbage by Dr. Pye Smith. A captured negro is flung alive into the sea in the middle passage. From his last gurgle proceeds an effect (an actual physical effect) which extends over the ocean, carrying to every solitary shore a deposition against the crime. A man destitute of science should speak with modesty; but I confess I have no power to believe that the disturbance of a square yard of water shall propagate a movement that shall make its way, and in numberless directions, through all the turbulence and infinite confusion and conflicts of the element all over its countless leagues.\*

\* Of course, the truth involved in this particular illustration, and in the general law which it illustrates, is not supposed to be measurable or appreciable by the coarse instruments of human science. As a mathematical truth, however, it is demonstrable; being based on one of the fundamental axioms of dynamics—that action and reaction are equal. As a moral truth, the doctrine involved—the indestructibleness of moral influences—is, though on different grounds, equally undeniable. In an all-related and progressive system, no such influence or element having once found admission, can, in every sense, cease to exist. The system can never again be, as it would have been if that element had never come into it. Each particular influence blends with the ever-augmenting sum of influences, the whole of which is to be finally accounted for. Whether or not a man “will hold himself under any responsibility for the future millions [of effects] to follow and to operate somewhere, sometime, from everything he does or says,” will depend on his mental and moral constitution and habits. If I believe that the indestructibleness of moral influences is a doctrine of the word of God, I can hardly conceive of a more affecting *practical* consideration than that all the effects which I voluntarily originate are, in a scripture sense, “works,” some of which “go before” me into eternity to meet me on my arrival there; and others of which will “follow after” at an indefinite interval, bringing with them all.



But, to the book.—You will not wonder if a man, dried and chilled by seventy years, addicted through experience, if not somewhat given by temperament, to sombre meditations; compelled to look more on the dark side, presented, as it is in immensely greater breadth, in history and the actual state of the world, than the bright one, should think he perceives a pervading tone of exaggeration. The author surveys the whole scene before him under the gladsome light of an orient and a vernal sun.

It has occurred to me to imagine a parallel representation, carried on step by step with the Essayist, by such a man as I will describe. He shall be an earnest lover of truth, a decided believer in Christianity, a clear and impartial thinker, (as far as impartiality is an attainable thing), and of ample information. He shall not be repelled into a temper of opposition by what he may deem excessive in the language and the expectations of missionary advocates. "*Valeat quantum*," he will say,—not in the affectation of candour, but in simple justice. But he shall say,—“Let us have the plain positive truth, the matter-of-fact reality, divested of the fallacies of rhetoric, of all factitious excitements, and of every thing which we must in conscientious judgment ascribe to enthusiasm.”

This man accompanies the eloquent sanguine missionary advocate, in his wide geographical tour, to all the places where the missionary cause is in operation, and to those where there is the loudest call for its introduction, or the most favourable circumstances for its reception. And since that cause, in all its proclamations, claims the whole world

the fruits which, during that interval, they have contributed to produce. The attenuated feebleness and inappreciable subtlety of many of the influences in question, are admitted; as well as the speed with which they pass beyond our power of tracing them, the apparently inextricable manner in which they become complicated with other elements of a similar nature, and the fact that no man will be held accountable for *all* the effects to the production of which his influence has tended. But these considerations do not affect the truth of the doctrine, nor should they abate its practical power. Their only proper effect seems to be that of making us feel more deeply the necessity of that final judgment in which the chemistry of the moral atmosphere shall be perfectly analysed, and of enlarging our views of that Omniscience which will then account for every particle of the whole, and apportion to every one who has breathed it his just reward.

J. H.

as its rightful domain, for its activity and its calculation of ultimate effect, he is authorized to make his estimates and proportions according to that great scale.

He goes, shall we say, to the North American Indians, a race plainly doomed to become extinct, except some diminutive relic, as being irreclaimably wild, invincibly averse to any mode of life which would admit even a protracted *attention* to Christian truth. And he will ask, what is the real proportionate amount of the Christian effect produced, in present or past time, on this ill-fated, forlorn race? And what are the circumstances, what is the value of the circumstances, affording a presumption of future success?

Next, he may as well go from the western coast, across the Pacific, to China, with its two or three hundred or more millions (Japan, with its 30,000,000, he may not even touch). What is the effect here, taken in cool statistics, and what are the auspices? How many times ten, out of these hundreds of millions, have received Christianity into their minds, plainly understanding it, and feeling its spiritual and moral power—after the long labours of a number of very able and indefatigable men? And of what width, accurately measured, are those crevices and cracks which are deemed to promise a practical breach in that mental wall around them, which has been proved of far more solid and enduring consistence than the massive and immense structure of stone which encircles their empire?

On his route to India, our surveyor may take Tartary to the north, with its tribes and hordes of barbarians; and may cast a glance over at the semi-paganism of a large portion of the nominally Greek church; or he may take a southward sweep by the Archipelago, Malacca, Siam, &c.; and in his traverse through those realms of darkness, a faint glimmer on some spot or two, a little taper as it were, will tell him all the difference between the present condition and the profoundest night.

In the lower part of India, he *will* find a tangible effect of long and multifarious missionary exertions. But after an expanded view over a hundred millions, it is with a depressed feeling that he wishes and tries to make out a list of one thousand genuine converts from paganism; including all the deceased. The greatest number of those who

renounce idolatry pass into a sort of deism, little less hostile than paganism itself to Christianity. He sees with pleasure an *alterative* process, gradually corroding the old system on the southern border, and a relaxing power of the superstition, to a certain extent, into the country; but is quite incredulous of any thing like a general readiness and movement to break from it. It belongs not to human nature to make other than a very slow and difficult escape from an inveterate, complex, comprehensive superstition, which pervades the whole economy of sentiment and life.

Carrying forward with him the large portion of Mahomedism in India, to be reckoned into the formally Mahomedan empire, our moral surveyor sees the prophet in such absolute and hitherto impregnable domination, that he asks, what *miracle* that is to be which is destined to break it up.

The *Jewish* people he will pass by, much in the same manner as an explorer of a continent would touch and leave the border of a tract of hopelessly sterile wilderness. And there is the vast interior of Africa!

In concluding this circuit round the globe, made in company with the missionary geographer, he will make account, willingly and gladly, of what has been done and is doing, and of all the real signs and omens of a brightening future. But he will still insist, "Let us, for the present at least, keep faithfully to proportion and reality." And then, to how many splendid and almost tumultuary celebrations may there be, in a low and as it were distant sound, an echo that mutters—"The day of small things." And as to the wide-spread agitation, mobility, and upheaving restlessness, which is disturbing the old order of things, and is represented as having an almost directly *religious* tendency, as if all nations were simultaneously awakening from their long and deep stupor, and passionately crying out for a true religion, he cannot help thinking there is an excessive indulgence of excited imagination. How many voices of intelligent meaning in this cry?—how many from China and the contiguous regions?—how many from Northern Asia and India?—how many from Persia, from Interior Africa, from the whole Moslem world;—from the Papal dominions in Austria, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Central and South America?

He may be old enough to have lived through the whole course of the most prodigious and overturning commotion that, for many ages, has shaken and convulsed the world; and he deplores to see how small, in proportion, the result, as to any unequivocal aid or impulsion to the cause of Christianity.

Why do I say, and so prolixly, all this? Certainly not from a perverse disposition to depreciate what is real and true, in fact or in prospect; but to intimate that there may be a very material difference between the amount of what is strictly real and true, and the magnified and ambitious conception that would be formed from an elated eloquence; and to suggest that it may be useful sometimes to recover from that fascination to a calm and exact estimate.

. . . . I must ask indulgence to my writing in an unconnected and fragmentary way; for it is going much aside from any line of connection if I notice here that part of your doctrine which inculcates, for the support of the missionary system, such a restrictive economy of general *expenditure*, as would exclude every thing that could be adjudged a superfluity. Now is it not obvious, that in the present, or any thing like the present, constitution of society, a practical conformity to this rule would have a calamitous consequence?

I have sometimes imagined a zealous advocate of missions enforcing, on a large assembly, this law in application to particulars; taking the licence of specifying them by name, in order to make the application express and pointed. He shall, for instance, denounce all decorative furniture; condemn all unnecessary diversity of dresses; and any quality of the necessary ones beyond plainness and cheapness—*silks* probably to be renounced, all of elaborate and ornamental texture certainly; condemn the wares of the silversmith, and even the watchmaker, observing that a pinchbeck watch-case will do just as well as a silver one—gold not even to be thought of;—put a *very* close restriction, amounting to a prohibition, except in very special cases, of *carriages*;—prohibit supernumerary books, engravings, &c., &c., &c.

Well; the next day he calls, for a subscription, on, say, the linen-draper, mercer, hatter, or tailor (and observe, these classes contribute more *in proportion* to beneficent

purposes than richer men). What will the mercer, draper, cabinet-maker, &c., say to him? "Sir, you must not come to me; for, if your injunctions were to take full effect, my business, the support of my family, and from which I have afforded something to your cause, would be broken up." If in London, let him take his answer from a Spitalfields manufacturer. As to the coach-builder, he may dismiss immediately nine in ten of his hands, to seek employment and bread in some other business equally cut down.—It is plain that society must fall in pieces, unless maintained by a miracle.

If it should occur to any one to allege that the fitting out of missionary enterprises, on a great scale, would itself bring into action a considerable portion of employment and trade, we have only to ask, whence are the tradesmen and workmen to be *paid*, but from the missionary funds,—and those funds, whence to be supplied? The expenditure is mainly absorbed by a far-off field, whence no return is to be expected, except in the distant contingency of a prosperous commerce with the remote region being created through the civilizing effect of the missionary establishments.

By such an omnivorous requisition of the missionary cause, the middle and lower classes of the religious public would be reduced very much *below a mere inability to contribute*; it would be, as to a great number, *an inability to live*.\* Allow me a few sentences on that which forms

\* If I had replied to these remarks in a spirit of respectful and amicable controversy—a kind of reply, however, which, as will be seen at the close of the letter, Mr. Foster deprecated—I might, perhaps, have said something to the following effect:—Your train of remark on Christian expenditure, considering "the present constitution of society," contains very much of affecting truth. Nor am I aware that in anything I have said or written on the subject, I have ever given utterance to sentiments avowedly, or even by fair implication, at variance with it. My chief design has been to show, not that the sumptuary habits of Christians are wrong, allowing the present constitution of society to be right, but that this constitution itself is materially at issue with the Word of God; and, consequently, that the Christian has to choose between inflaming the evil, by his conformity to the particular usages of society in question, and the opposite course of correcting them by making some approximation to the scriptural requirements of self denial.

You say, that the trade classes "contribute more *in proportion* to

the essence and prominence of your theory—the asserted obligation of all Christians to send forth, to throw out, if I may so express it, the whole soul, with all its faculties,

beneficent purposes than richer men.” They do so, and the important fact involves, as it appears to me, the condemnation of that state of things which you view with so lenient an eye. For, in the first place, if the fact implies anything, it implies that as the tradesman becomes rich, he will contribute less proportionately to benevolent objects than he did before; a result which I do not see that, on your principles, you could condemn. For, secondly, if you went to him to remonstrate on the obvious inconsistency of his liberality diminishing in proportion to the increase of his wealth, he might justly reply, “Sir, you must not come to me; for if your remonstrance were to take full effect in the reduction of my expenses, my tradesmen would have less to give. I may be told, indeed, that I shall be held responsible by the Supreme for not enlarging my charities in proportion to the increase of my means; that I am robbing myself of much true and refining enjoyment in not being my own almoner; and that I cannot be surprised if my tradesmen imitate my example, and spend their gains exclusively on themselves, with the excuse that the class below them will have so much the more to give; and if that lower class again should adopt the same course—pleading that which is right for me cannot be wrong for them. In a word, acting on your principle, I have less than ever to contribute to the great objects which you advocate; and I rather expected that you would remonstrate with me for not having spent the whole.” Now I do not see what you could say consistently in reply. For if you tell me that your remarks only go the length of implying that all the decorations and superfluities of the rich must not be given up, or the tradesman will have nothing to impart to charitable objects, I might rejoin, that I only imply that, unless some limit be assigned to these superfluities, the rich will have nothing to impart, and will be doing all that example can do to lead the classes below them to be as self-indulging and all-absorbing as themselves. While you, therefore, are saying to me, in effect, “Take care, or the tradesman will not have the means of giving;” I am only saying to you in effect, “Take care, or, with the increase of his gains, there will be such an increase of his personal expenditure as to reduce the proportional amount of his liberality; while the rich will consider themselves exempt from consecrating more than the *minimum* of their property to God.”

Now, dear sir, for which of the two cautions is there the greater necessity? Is the danger on the side of too great self denial, or too little? For about six thousand years it has been, you will admit, rather on the side of the too little. And judging from present indications, the danger of its becoming too great is at least six thousand years in the future. Indeed the sumptuary habits in question—the only ones which I have ever decried—are admitted on all hands to be on the increase. It is not an evil that cures itself by excess. Its “appetite grows by that it feeds on.” Every new prospect of getting wealth, gives the demon power to take more entire possession of the soul. Hence the railroad mania, by which many of the

passions, affections, to go into an extraneous and foreign interest and agency; passing forward, onward, in unremitting impulse and expansion, to indefinite remoteness. This was the spirit indispensable to an apostle, and not a little of it is so to an effective missionary. But I own my inability to conceive the general realization of such an order of sentiment in the minds of religious men as possible, without a recasting of humanity and society into a most unnatural and factitious shape; or even as compatible with a due and faithful attention to what is to men, as individuals, the one greatest interest. The chief concern of each one is his own final happiness. Indeed, what is the object of the missionary cause itself but just this—to bring men, as individuals, to become earnestly intent on their own salvation? It is to fix each of them there, as the primary object; and not instantly to start them off as so many missionaries to others, as if the good obtained were to be realized rather in the transmission than in the possession. The concern for the welfare of others is to come as a secondary effect of the converting grace.

And looking at the condition of the generality of good men among ourselves, I can conceive an order of feeling and reflection in many of them nearly such as I may suppose one of them to express—"I wish well to the missionary cause, and have contributed something in aid from my limited means, drawn upon as they are in so many ways. But before I can send out my whole soul

religious have been "possessed," as well as those who make little or no pretensions to religion.

Nor does the evil resulting from these habits limit its effects to the reduction of the Christian treasury. If the newspaper and periodical press is to be relied on, the name of the evil is "Legion," and its effects everywhere, "grinding the face of the poor," giving to them the lowest wages possible, exacting from their bones and sinews as much labour as can be got, without quite breaking up the human machine at once; allowing to one or two millions of "white slaves" no leisure, and grudging them their little rest, and necessitating a state of brutalizing "Popular Ignorance," a description of which you have burnt into the minds of your readers. Those evils are only some of the natural progeny of that ever-exacting principle of selfishness which robs the altar of God for its own table, crying, "Give! give!" and is never satisfied.

J. H.

in a passionate concern for the remote tribes of the earth, to glow with ardour unabating on the other side of the globe, I must have a less onerous pressure at home, in the concerns of—that soul itself. There is the endless conflict with its corrupt nature, to be maintained often with indignant and melancholy emotions. There are the pains and apprehensions of conscious guilt; the temptations and the besetting sin; the defectiveness of my faith, and the difficulty of maintaining a devotional spirit. There is, in short, the discipline for ‘working out my own salvation with fear and trembling.’ And to give emphasis to all this, there is the near aspect of Death confronting me. Under the weight of this self-centring interest, real, immediate, and urgent, I confess I am tempted to say, What are to me, in comparison, Africans, Hindoos, Chinese, Mahomedans; they are in the hands of God all-powerful and beneficent; and are they to be so far transferred to me that I am to take it on my conscience, that he is, at this very time, holding me responsible for his own final award to any of them?”

It may well be believed that something like this is the case with many thoughtful men; and *most* the case with the *most* thoughtful, most reflective.—The man may have to add (in very many cases there is *certainly* this addition), the cares, the often painfully absorbing cares of a family; and the laborious, anxious occupation, and frequent vexations and hazards of a secular business, which compulsorily demands the far greater part of the man’s time and thought; especially and eminently so in the present state of the world and of this country.

I put the case rather strongly, but honestly; and I really do not see how that effusion of the whole soul, in a passion for operating on the pagan world, can be compatible with the actual condition, and the most immediate and imperative duties and necessities, of the far greater number, indeed of the main body, of religious persons. I even fear that a certain portion (I should be sorry to know how much) of the lively excitement recently and at present in action, may be at the cost of some diversion from a deliberate constant attention to those most immediate and grave interests; and it is easy to apprehend how the effect of the dazzle of such



a large and ambitious object, presenting itself in the character of a zealous Christianity, may for awhile put out of sight the serious business which requires to be transacted within; and preclude or suspend the sense of its necessity.

When the demand made on a good man by so many cares of his own allows him to look abroad, the thing that first and immediately meets his sight is the nearly pagan condition of a multitude of human creatures close around him; and the most wretched state of education. Will it not be, and should it not be, some time before he can quite freely send off his thoughts to regions at the distance of a thousand leagues; for which flight the missionary orator is earnest to give them wings?

.... I do not forget that home-operations, in promotion of education and religion, have been greatly augmented during the period in which the missionary spirit has come into such extensive activity. And it may be assumed to have been, for the greater part, the same principle that has been at work in the near and the far-off departments. In the latter, however, there has been much more of a *factitious* interest, from the effect on imagination of what is novel, foreign, strange, picturesque, and adventurous; from the sympathetic ignition of large assemblies; sometimes from ostentatious rivalry. It is like the descent from high poetry to very humble prose, to come back from many-coloured tribes, from perfumed groves, from grand remains of fallen empires, from islands representing Paradise, and even from the grotesque enormities of idolatry,—to look on the state of your own parish. I am, however, unwilling to believe there are many instances like one I may mention. A few days since I was in the company of a very respectable dissenting minister, an old acquaintance, stationed till lately in a rather prosperous rural village. He said the missionary cause is in great favour with the congregation, drawing from them and the vicinity about sixty pounds a-year; but there is hardly any thing worth the name of a *school* in the place, except the little that can be done on a Sunday, to be forgotten in the week. Again and again he had made strong representations to them on the subject, but in vain; and consequently the children have been growing up in gross and vulgar ignorance.—There is more *éclat*

in contributing to promote education in the West or the East Indies, than among the rustics in the vicinity.\* There is one other topic on which I should be tempted into an

\* Here are three objects specified as being, not only distinct from the missionary enterprise, but even endangered by it. The first is "the self-centring interest" of a man's own salvation. As far as I remember, I have uniformly represented all *relative* benevolence as having its only scriptural foundation laid in *personal* piety; and have repeatedly cautioned the reader against the danger of regarding the former as a substitute for the latter. But is there no danger on the other side? Do not Mr. Foster's remarks appear to imply that the relative and other personal claims of piety are antagonistic; that the one class is defrauded of just so much as is given to the other? Whereas the love of God and of our fellow man are both based ultimately on the same principle. A practical regard for the well-being of man is made, in Scripture, not only a *sign* of piety, but is one of the appointed *means* for increasing it. So that while it is quite true that "the most thoughtful" will take the most comprehensive views of the claims of their own salvation, it is true also, that if their thoughtfulness be scriptural, they will take the most enlarged views of the claims of their fellow men. They will not look for the most eminent piety in men who have thought themselves into a cavern or a cell, but among those whose piety is alike devotional and active, personal and relative. This is only in harmony with that general principle of the Divine government, that "he who watereth others shall himself also be watered."

Another of the supposed claimants is, "the painfully absorbing cares of a family;" and this especially owing to "the present state of the world and of this country." I doubt not that many a good man sighs to do more than he is doing for the diffusion of the gospel, but is incapacitated by his social condition as much as if he were a fettered captive. The bare statement of this fact, however, settles nothing. It names only the proximate cause of his incapacity. All the preceding causes are left in darkness. His best friends may have doubted his wisdom, apart from all religious considerations, in entailing on himself the cares in question. Or, if it be said that the causes are of a general nature, and arise from "the state of this country;" this, it seems to me, only brings us back to the subject of the preceding note. For what is there so disabling for beneficence in the character of the times, if it be not the perpetual conflict which it has come to be the custom to maintain between income and expenditure? To augment the income there must be untiring vigilance, hazardous speculations, and competition in all its forms. And as such conduct in one party naturally tends to create similar habits in another, the painfully absorbing cares which at first served to increase profits, become indispensable at length in order barely to retain them, or even to stave off absolute ruin. That the evil is difficult of cure, I admit; every chronic disease of society is so. I speak only of its nature and origin; and may respectfully remind the Christian that if the evil be of the kind described, the remedy is (it may be indeed only to a very limited extent) in his own hands and that he is held responsible for employing it.

I will briefly advert to the third object noticed by Mr. Foster, the

emphatic language, if I had not a difficulty to express exactly, discreetly, perhaps intelligibly, what I wish to convey. I allude to the light in which the Almighty is presented in much of what is spoken and written in the missionary service. I confess I have been confounded at what I have heard or read. For it seems to me to represent the Maker and Sovereign of the world as acting on a plan of exceedingly limited interference in the moral condition and destiny

nearly pagan condition of "multitudes close around us." The *order* which our beneficence should observe in arranging its objects, is, I think, prescribed in a general manner, in the word of God. Nor can that order—proceeding from ourselves outwards—be violated with impunity. Not only would it be an inversion of nature to *begin* with "the ends of the earth;" a wise man would begin with "those of his own flesh," if only for the sake of creating the means for more effectually benefiting ultimately those distant regions. But, then, the prescribed order of our procedure leaves another question still open;—how much of our attention is due to a near object before we extend our regards to one remoter? In other words, the doctrine of order introduces the doctrine of *proportion*. For it is as clear that remote objects have a claim on our regard *as soon* as a certain proportion of labour has been bestowed on the nearer, as it is that such labour was not due to them *earlier*. Now if in timing and in apportioning the regard given respectively to home and to foreign claims, some slight errors of apparent partiality are chargeable on Christian activity, it can hardly be a subject for wonder. If such errors can be pointed out indeed, and if they are not then corrected, the parties concerned will lay themselves open to rebuke. But let it be remembered that when the missionary enterprise began, the churches were doing comparatively nothing for either class of objects. It was a great thing to awake them. It can scarcely be a matter of just complaint that they did not awake to perfect wisdom at once. Churches and societies, like individuals, can acquire this qualification only by experience. Besides, it will be admitted that, speaking generally, the men who have done the most for foreign objects, have been among the most attentive to the claims of home. And, as it has been already remarked, that the personal and the relative claims of piety are not antagonistic, the same may be affirmed of missionary and of home claims. The diffusion of the gospel is not only a sign of the piety of a church, by reaction it becomes the means of increasing that piety.

Mr. Foster's anecdote illustrates a fact of occasional occurrence. A similar instance has lately come under my own observation. But as a set off, instances might be named in which the salary of the minister had been increased, and the education of the young had received an impulse, in consequence of the new life infused by the cause of Christian missions. I will only add, that Mr. Foster's own inimitable missionary sermon will be found to contain sentiments admirably corrective of those now remarked on in his letter.

J. H.

of the human race,—almost as acting in a subordinate or secondary capacity to the human instruments he employs, or *unsuccessfully* calls upon to be employed.

The idea forcibly suggested is, that, calmly keeping his power in abeyance, he devolves on a certain portion of men a real practical responsibility for the salvation or perdition of undefined multitudes of their race; making his own will on that awful alternative conditional on the choice and conduct of these responsible persons. Certain things conferred on the fallen race would be an infinite blessing; they *may* be conferred, for he is willing; but whether they *shall* be conferred, depends on another will—the will of that same section of the race to do their duty to the rest. As if he should be supposed to say, “If you will zealously labour for their salvation, I will save them; otherwise not. They may be saved if you choose; it is more your concern than mine.” A tribe or nation of eastern pagans has perished, through successive generations; there has been in the church in this western world a moral power, and therefore duty, to secure, in some important measure, the contrary event; the decision was placed in the hands of the depositaries of that power; but they were destitute of Christian philanthropy, and they decided fatally for the poor pagans whose destiny was depending on them. Thus the final state of a portion, perhaps a large portion, of the human race, has been, *immediately*, less at the disposal of the Sovereign Maker, than of a certain order of human beings, who might have effected their salvation if they would. Multitudes of pagans are perishing at this hour, actually because Christians in England are parsimonious of their exertions and their money. The Sovereign Being is looking on, and leaving their future state dependent on this penurious and precarious resource. In one of the speeches not long since delivered in Bristol, the speaker supposed himself to be addressing some one (any one) individual; and said,—“By refusing at this time the contribution which you can afford, you may be consigning one soul, that otherwise might be saved, to endless perdition.”—A not unusual figure has been that of a miserable crowd approaching the verge of a dreadful gulf. And the exclamation is, Oh, will you not eagerly and instantly hasten to throw yourselves between? What mortal cruelty to

linger! The catastrophe is infallible if you do not rush to the rescue; for higher power declines to interpose. Lords of their destiny, look at the dread alternative you are deciding. At hearing such things who can keep out, or force out of his mind, the idea of a Deity resembling the gods of Epicurus?

Sometimes, indeed, instead of what looks so like an attribution of indifference, a more gracious and sympathetic character is ascribed to the Supreme Power. He is earnestly intent on human salvation. "The heart of God" is deeply moved; he longs, he yearns for, he almost passionately desires, the conversion of heathens, of all mankind; he is, as it were, impatient to see his servants in zealous action; he pleads to them every motive that ought to arouse and actuate them; he reproaches their indolence; sets before them the mighty things which *cannot* be done till they shall go vigorously into the work; *his* operation being subjected to unwilling delay in waiting for theirs. And this is the Almighty Being whose single volition could transform the whole race in a moment!

Now, my dear Sir, whatever be the *right* way of setting forth the subject, I do think that which I have attempted to describe borders very nearly (doubtless unconsciously and unthinkingly) on impiety. I need not be reminded that in the Scriptures there are many expressions, used in condescending accommodation, which might be cited as analogous to the strain of language against which I am protesting. Let those strongly figurative expressions stand out as illustrative of that condescension, manifesting itself in such forms of speech as men might not have presumed to utter. Let them be cited as what God has condescended to say. But to construct of similar figures our current language, which ought to be that of plain truth and fact, will be to establish a fallacious order of ideas, to which literal truth will come to be the exception.

. . . . A glance back at what I have thus been writing makes me fear, that you will set me down as one of the coldest friends, to say the least, of the missionary cause. Not so. I am gratified in viewing the wide and widening extent of its operations—the comprehensive statement of which forms a highly valuable section of your work; and

must have surprised many of its readers. And in every well-judged attempt I feel the complacency of a confidence *that some good will be done*. It should need no sentiment, even of *piety*, to admire the self-devotement of so many Christian adventurers and labourers : it might seem to have a commanding appeal to that warm dilating sympathy which all the world gives to the *heroic character*, when displayed, as you observe, with an animadversion that cannot be too pointed, in any department of enterprise but the cause of Christ. But, unfortunately for me, from a temperament somewhat sanguine and ardent in youth, I am dried and cooled down to that of old age. The course of the world's events, since that "season of prime," has been a grievous disappointment. No one who is not toward twice your age can have any adequate conception of the commotion there was in susceptible and inflammable spirits. The proclamation went forth, "Overturn, overturn, overturn;" and there seemed to be a responsive earthquake in the nations. The vain, short-sighted seers of us had all our enthusiasm ready to receive the magnificent changes ;—the downfall of *all* old corrupt institutions, the explosion of prejudices, the demolition of the strongholds of ignorance, superstition, and spiritual with all other despotism ;—man on the point of being set free for a noble career of knowledge, liberty, philanthropy, virtue—and all that, and all that. A most shallow judgment, a pitiable ignorance of the nature of man, was betrayed in these elated presumptions. But they so possessed themselves of the mind as to prepare it to feel a bitterness of disappointment as time went on, through so many lustrums, and accomplished so niggardly a portion of all the dream.

And now, at the end of half a century, how much has been effected in the moral and religious state of the human race, comprehensively considered ? To what amount are they wiser, better, and happier ? True, in certain particulars, and estimated according to a limited scale, it may be said and admitted that much has been done ; and we are very apt to fix on some favoured section in the general view, and falsify its magnitude. But if our account be formed on a scale commensurate with the whole field of the active world, there would seem to be a mournful disproportion

between the collective result, and the prodigious amount of things bearing with combined, mingled, and what *should* have been *alterative* agency, on the human condition—the agitations, collisions, changes; the schemes, toils, sufferings; the expenditures of thought, speech, property, health, and life. There is, at least, so obstinate an *appearance* of disproportion that, after being looked upon through a long course of years, it denies me the ability to yield a *full* sympathy to your all-engrossing urgency of incitement and enthusiasm of confidence. I cannot help hearing a voice (may it be that of a false prophet) which says you reckon too fast, in your calculation of the effects to be accomplished by the actors and means already in the employment, or immediately at the disposal, of the missionary service. And as to that million-handed energy, which you so eloquently summon forth, as by sound of trumpet, in the form of what might be called a *general rising* of the Christian community, to devote their whole faculties and means, I must needs think that religion, *real* religion, exists under too many causes of repression, far too many inevitable complications, with *self*-concerns, domestic concerns, worldly concerns, party concerns, to allow the possibility of such a demonstration;—besides that, as I have noted before, one principle insisted on as indispensable to it, would, if attempted to be carried out to the extent apparently demanded, ruinously derange the frame and consistence in which society has always existed; that is, wants, to be supplied by means of the multiplicity and diversification of other wants, many of them artificial.

I hope, indeed may assume, that you are of a cheerful temperament; but are you not sometimes invaded by the darkest visions and reflections while casting your view over the scene of human existence, from the beginning to this hour? To me it appears a most mysteriously awful economy, overspread by a lurid and dreadful shade. I pray for the piety to maintain a humble submission of thought and feeling to the wise and righteous Disposer of all existence. But, to see a nature created in purity, qualified for perfect and endless felicity, but ruined at the very origin, by a disaster devolving fatally on all the race—to see it in an early age of the world estranged from truth, from the

love and fear of its Creator, from that, therefore, without which existence is a thing to be deplored—abandoned to all evil, till swept away by a deluge—the renovated race revolting into idolatry and iniquity, and spreading downward through ages in darkness, wickedness, and misery—no Divine dispensation to enlighten and reclaim it, except for one small section; and that section itself a no less flagrant proof of the desperate corruption of the nature—the ultimate, grand remedial visitation Christianity, labouring in a difficult progress and very limited extension, and soon perverted from its purpose into darkness and superstition, for a period of a thousand years—at the present hour known and even nominally acknowledged by very greatly the minority of the race, the mighty mass remaining prostrate under the infernal dominion, of which countless generations of their ancestors have been the slaves and victims—a deplorable majority of the people in the Christian nations strangers to the vital power of Christianity, and a large proportion directly hostile to it; and even the institutions pretended to be for its support and promotion being baneful to its virtue—its progress in the work of conversion, in even the most favoured part of the world, *distanced* by the progressive increase of the population, so that even there,—but to a fearful extent if we take the world at large,—the disproportion of the faithful to the irreligious is continually increasing—the sum of all these melancholy facts being, that thousands of millions have passed, and thousands every day are passing, out of the world, in no state of fitness for a pure and happy state elsewhere.—Oh, it is a most confounding and appalling contemplation!

And it would be a transcendently direful one, if I believed the doctrine of the eternity of future misery. It amazes me to imagine how thoughtful and benevolent men, believing that doctrine, can endure the sight of the present world and the history of the past. To behold successive, innumerable crowds carried on in the mighty impulse of a depraved nature, which they are impotent to reverse, and to which it is not the will of God, in his sovereignty, to apply the only adequate power, the withholding of which consigns them inevitably to their doom—to see them passing through a short term of mortal existence (absurdly sometimes denominated a



*probation*\*) under all the world's pernicious influences, with the addition of the malign and deadly one of the great Tempter and Destroyer, to confirm and augment the inherent depravity, on their speedy passage to everlasting woe, —I repeat, I am, without pretending to any extraordinary depth of feeling, amazed to conceive what they contrive to do with their sensibility, and in what manner they maintain a firm assurance of the Divine goodness and justice. Yet I see numbers of these good men preserving, apparently without great effort, a tone of equanimity, sometimes excited

\* Mr. Foster has here advanced within the awful shadow of a subject which seems to have partially obscured his perception of the ultimate ground of moral responsibility. There is reason to believe that the divine standard of man's accountability is a scale of all but unlimited graduation. While, therefore, it would be absurd to suppose that "the men of Sodom and Gomorrah" will be judged by the same scale as the men of "Caper-naum," would it not be almost as absurd to infer that, on that account, they will be judged by no scale whatever? "They who have sinned without (a written) law, shall be judged without law." Destitute of a written law, they are still within the jurisdiction of natural law. Of this class let the most uncivilized tribe be selected; still its members will be found to be held answerable to, and by, each other. Of this tribe let the last wandering survivor be taken; and it will be found that he is still, in many respects, "a law unto himself." The elements of responsibility are within him. His moral constitution, not his external advantages, renders him amenable to law. He is a man, and therefore he will be judged. He is a man whose moral nature has been exposed to the most debasing and depraving influences, and therefore he will be judged accordingly.

It may not be irrelevant to add, first, that as, among such portions of the human race, the period of intellectual infancy lasts much longer than it does among more cultivated classes, there is high probability for concluding that the state of accountability is not reached till a comparatively advanced period of youth. Secondly, it may be worth consideration whether, while *we* shall be reckoned with as to *how much* we have advanced in holiness considering our advantages, there may not be many who will be reckoned with as to *how little* they have retrograded in evil considering their disadvantages. I would not for a moment be supposed to contravene the everlasting principle that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But, believing that there is a class of cases in which a struggle is maintained against moral determination, which, though unsuccessful in the best sense, involves a greater amount of resistance to evil than is made by some who yet advance in excellence, it is to be supposed that such resistance will be taken into the account, however unavailing it may be in the highest respect. And, thirdly, is not the doctrine of future punishment rendered gratuitously startling, when viewed in relation to the classes described by Mr. Foster, by the too positive, equalizing, and objective views generally entertained respecting the *place* of punishment. In opposition to Scrip-

to hilarity, while every where closely surrounded by creatures whom, as not being the subjects of Divine grace, they deliberately regard as the destined victims of eternal fire; and must regard as if created on purpose, that by passing a few fleeting sinful moments here, they might be prepared for it.

I meet with a few intelligent and pious men who join in the disbelief; and suspect, that unavowedly, many others are repelled into strong doubt, at the least, by the infinite horror of the tenet.

Here again I am reminded how the missionary advocates make of all this just a charge against the church—the religious section,—as having been in effect owing to *them*; as if they had a certain power and responsibility, and had it now, to reverse substantially this awful destiny. But the supreme Sovereign's scheme and economy for the race was formed in no dependence on what the more privileged section might attempt, or not attempt, for them; formed indeed in a perfect foresight of what would *not* be attempted. How plain is it, that the case has its reason and its mystery in something far deeper than any consideration of what they might have done, and neglected to do. How self-evident the proposition, that if the sovereign Arbiter had INTENDED the salvation of the race, it must have been accomplished.

I really know not what apology to devise for this long intrusion on you, if you will not accept it as an excuse to say, I had no intention or expectation it should be any thing like half as long; and that I am sorry for not having the faculty or art of saying what I want to be at in a few words. I can, however, say, in words few and most explicit,

ture, the too general impression is, that there will be the same punishment for all the lost. And this, indeed, would follow necessarily, if, as it is too commonly supposed, the punishment depends almost entirely on the place, and if there is one place for all. But this would be to confound all gradations of evil character; and so far to make a mockery of that future judgment which is supposed to be designed to distinguish between them. I do not believe, indeed, that "the mind will be its own place" literally; that is, that there will be no objective. But I do believe that every man will "go to his own place," and that his place will be the exact counterpart of his moral character. So that while some will be "beaten with many stripes," we believe that for the minimum of guilt there will be a minimum of punishment.

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that I deprecate causing you the trouble of making any kind of reply, however brief. I need not say that I am nobody for any thing like *controversial discussion*. If your candour will just excuse this transient incursion across the path of your studies, it is all that is requested by, my dear sir, yours, with high respect, cordial regard, and all good wishes,

J. FOSTER.

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CCXXV. TO MR. JOHN FOSTER.

*Bourton, October 1, 1842.*

DEAR NEPHEW, . . . . I am glad you have such advantages for attendance on the means of grace, and though some of you prefer one place and sect, and some another, I have no doubt you agree in the main thing, and preserve family peace.

. . . . . Three of you, it seems, are come into family cares and duties. I wish that wisdom and resolution may be given you to act worthily in that situation, and I wish that your families may rise up to be a blessing to you and good and happy in themselves. You have great need to pray for the Divine blessing on the parents and the children. I am sometimes willing to hope that the thousands of petitions offered to God by *my* pious parents, and *your* grandfather, and mother, for the welfare of us, their descendants, may even thus long afterwards be of some avail, with their God and ours. But our own prayers for ourselves and our children must continually ascend to him, pleading in the name and merits of our Lord and Saviour.

It often comes into my thoughts how much good, of the highest kind, would have been obtained if I had been as constantly earnest as I ought to have been in that most profitable of all exercises. At the age of every one of us there is room to mend in this important matter; and I hope and pray that we may not neglect it.

. . . . . Give my kind respects to your mother, whom I congratulate on having been so highly favoured in point of health, and on having such worthy children around her.

To William also I would express all friendly good wishes for his welfare in all respects, and the same you will yourself accept from your old uncle, whom you have never seen, and who has never seen you, nor probably will in this world, and whose name is like your own,

JOHN FOSTER.

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CCLXXVI. TO THE REV. THOMAS GRINFIELD, M.A.

December 22, 1842.

Before submitting the few slight notices of your preface, let me be allowed to apologize for what I am afraid was a great rudeness in my matter of putting Mr. — “out of court.”

The case is, that I have no patience with the outcries raised by clergymen in, about, *against* their own church; their multiform dissensions; their mutual accusations and protestations; the insubordination and remonstrances of the inferiors against the consecrated authorities in high places, &c. One is provoked to say, Shame on you;—why do you not strive with the utmost care to hush up your subject of disturbance, and maintain at least the *appearance* of a dignified union and conformity, according to the declared object of your institution, and under the sanction of its most venerable order? Have you not a grand standard of faith and discipline sacredly preserved, unaltered from generation to generation; appointed for the express purpose of maintaining inviolate the Christian doctrine and practical institutions, to which, in its most comprehensive application, you all solemnly engage your assent and fidelity? I must in mere decency believe it is not a Jesuitical juggle, but a carefully explicit formula of doctrines and prescriptions; and also I must in decency believe that you have signed your adhesion intelligently and honestly. Is it not most scandalous then, that you should be seen as a body, all in confusion; section in conflict with section; your rule of faith interpreted in every arbitrary mode, with mutual accusations of perverting it; and with loud complaints from some of you of twenty things wrong in either

the constitution or the administration of the church? Pray try to come, if possible, to such an understanding among yourselves, that you may no longer stand before the nation in a condition which, taken in conjunction with your solemn pledge to conformity, must expose you to opprobrium. We dissenters having no standard of conformity, having no high prelatial authorities over us, may sectarianize and fight as much as we please; but for *you*, under the solemn obligations you have taken upon you, to exhibit yourselves in such lawless commotion—is not to be tolerated. You should either maintain the peace of the church, or come out of it; for as to *altering it to the mind of any one, or any sect of you*, that would be an idle dream.

It was under the habit of such kind of feelings, that I was indisposed to hear the remonstrant lamentation of good Mr. —. More than enough of this.

In the department of Christian morality, I think many of those who are distinguished as evangelical preachers greatly and culpably deficient. They rarely, if ever, take some one topic of moral duty, as—honesty, veracity, impartiality, Christian temper, forgiveness of injuries, temperance (in any of its branches), the improvement of time, and investigate specifically its principle, rules, discriminations, adaptations. There is none of the *casuistry* found in many of the old divines. Such discussions would have cost far more labour of thought than dwelling and expatiating on the general evangelical doctrines; but would have been eminently useful; and it is very *necessary*, in order to set people's judgments and consciences to rights. It is partly in consequence of this neglect (very general, I believe) that many religious kind of people have unfixed and ill-defined apprehensions of moral discriminations. *Hall* told Anderson that in former years he had often insisted on subjects of this order.\* I know not whence the ill-judged alteration, during his resi-

\* "Be not afraid of devoting whole sermons to particular parts of moral conduct and religious duties. It is impossible to give right views of them, unless you dissect characters, and describe particular virtues and vices. 'The fruits of the flesh' and 'the fruits of the Spirit' must be distinctly pointed out. To preach against sin in general, without descending to particulars, may lead many to complain of the evil of their hearts, while at the same time, they are awfully inattentive to the evil of their conduct."—*HALL'S Charge to the Rev. J. K. Hall, Works, iv. 483.*

dence at Bristol; to judge from so much as I heard. He could hardly have fallen in with the common notion; "Lead them to the true evangelical principles of doctrine, and the morals will follow of themselves." I would answer, "If so, how superfluous is a large portion of the New Testament, as being specifically and often minutely *preceptive*!"

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COXXVII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, December 24, 1842.*

I am glad to find you safely settled in your *temporary* domicile (you can understand the interest I have in so describing it) after passing once again over several score of leagues of this unhappy planet. I am wishing you may never but once more make that same traverse; so that in that once more you may say to the hills, the streams, the towns, the inns, the bridges, as you shall pass them,—*adieu*. The thought has often come on me, in my occasional journeys, as one thing and another has passed my view, "I shall see that no more!" And this sentiment becomes more distinctly felt in the late decline of life, not only because the shortened residue of life renders it of course less likely that journeys will be repeated, but also because there is a peculiar pensiveness, an evening shade, over the general tone of feeling.

. . . . The town is become to me very nearly as if uninhabited; and besides, my walking faculty is strangely diminished within the year now so near an end; and also the time of going after books, looking in at auctions, &c., is nearly gone by. From necessity it is so at present with you, and I hope will be so when you shall find again much more opportunity for indulging the folly. A folly, I repeat, with grievous emphasis, when I look round on this room; wondering how I could ever be so besotted as not to see the *impossibility* of *reading* the long accumulation. And mine is a more bitter repentance than yours can be; for you have dealt on *saving* terms, while I have foolishly expended money which often was wanted for other uses,—

and in a quantity which would have been valuable for those uses. . . . .

Have you wholly given up the project and task of making some use of the *Diaries* of a pious man? You may do so and little more will be said. It is very curious to observe how the first eagerness for publishing something about a good man has quieted down after the project had been kept some time in abeyance. There is something melancholy in this, as showing how the warm memory of the good can decline by degrees to a comparative indifference, even when there is not a real change in the judgment of their worthiness. In a little while after our departure how very, very few, will feel a painful sense of *wanting* us. It will be confined to some three or four (if not still fewer) who had a cordial deep attachment to us, from relationship, or the most intimate kind of friendship. One has a feeling, that it would be gratifying to be so remembered by these few that, in their advance toward the end of life, they should be delighted with the thought and expectation of meeting us again elsewhere. You have such remembrances of the departed, remembrances cherished in the depth of the heart; thus placing you in an affectionate relation to a world unseen.

Our sense of deprivation in the loss of persons who were dear to us, is soothed by the thought that there are so much fewer to feel anxious for in leaving them behind. In this matter I have the advantage (in this particular view I may rightly call it so) over many, in having only these two of my family to leave exposed to the ills of life in this wretched world; and *you* have the advantage over *me*. *One*, chiefly, will be the object of your last solitudes. I do not say, that I could wish myself in the same case; but I have often thought, that to see my children safely and happily out of the world would be a very strong consolation for their loss. But we must not distrust that all-sufficient Providence in which we profess so firmly to believe.

The strangely mild and almost vernal temperature (a delightful sunshine while I am writing) seems to promise that the old year shall go off in smiles, and even in buds and flowers,—an alleviating circumstance to ill-clad, ill-housed poverty. In alleviation of this, one is now hoping that something will ere long be done by *man*. . . . . Glad

to see what a strong and wide excitement is produced by the operations of the "League," aided by calamitous experience. There seems to be an universally confident expectation of the abolition, at no distant time, of that detestable incubus on the nation's prosperity, the Corn-law. . . . [The] *Premier* must make stout fight for it yet awhile, in order to stand well with his gang; at the same time that I believe there is no man in England more fully convinced that it is a nuisance which ought to be abated.

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CXXVIII. TO W. L. R. CATES, ESQ.

December 30, 1842.

DEAR SIR,—You will naturally, and indeed inevitably, have considered your not receiving any acknowledgment of your friendly letter, of a date so very far back, as a proof (I need not say of so plain a fact as a very defective *civility*, but) of great want of kind and benevolent feeling. This interpretation would be so reasonable, according to fair and usual rules of judging, that I am reduced to the hope that you may be *able* to believe me, when I assure you, it would be entirely a mistake.

If I were to attempt to explain how, then, such a thing could happen, I should have to confess to you such a power of the besetting sin of *procrastination*, as I hope your own experience cannot, and never will, enable you to conceive. It would be an exhibition amusing to the spectator, but mortifying enough to me, if it could be shown how many hundreds or thousands of things which I acknowledged proper to be done, was disposed to do, and intended to do, to-morrow, were not done in due time, or not done at all. Defer the thing *once*, defer it *now*, and there is no knowing when its time will come. If one imitated any other person's bad example, as submissively as one imitates one's own, what a contemptible servility it would seem.

It is gratifying to be held in cordial esteem by a person of intelligent and serious mind, even when personally unknown. At the same time I would wish to be something better than flattered, by the assurance of having been happy



enough to render a material service to such a mind. A benefit conveyed through a silent channel, in a direction of which I could have no conjecture, to your mind from mine, making me, as it were, a sharer in a good with a person I have never seen, and may never see, I would account a favour conferred on me by a good Providence. Your name will be remembered as affording one pleasing assurance that I have not lived altogether in vain.

Presuming that you may not be advanced very far on in life, I hope you have yet a prolonged course before you for making the best and happiest use of life; and I trust that a numerous train of advantages will be afforded to you for accomplishing that great purpose.

With sincerest wishes and prayers that it may be so,

I am, dear sir,

Very truly yours,

J. FOSTER.

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CCXXIX. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*January 31, 1843.*

Considering what an infinite multiplicity of things is taking place in the surrounding world, one finds one's own insignificance in having so little for one's own part to recount. To live through the day, in ordinary habits, to sleep through the night, continuing and repeating this through the week, through the month, with very occasionally a call by an acquaintance, and a letter from a distance; and thus a short life is wearing away.

.... What a vast transition it is from one's own little share of good and ill to that of the national millions, whose interests are this week portentously coming in question, and under no hopeful auspices. The settled expectation seems to be that the hateful and demented party are to carry it all their own way, for at least one year more of aggravated national calamity. One can sometimes almost wonder that the righteous Sovereign does not strike such a combination in iniquity with some evident signal mark of avenging justice. But this is not now, as of old, the order

of his government. There is the sad consideration, besides, that the *suffering* part of the nation are, for the greatest part, in no condition to appeal to Heaven, being no less strangers to the knowledge and fear of God than the class under whose iniquity they are suffering. The most melancholy consideration as to the suffering masses is, that their afflictions can have no tendency to do them good in respect to a higher interest, but powerfully the very contrary—tending to alienate their minds from any belief in Providence, and to generate a spirit of recklessness, contempt of law, and intense revenge. They are alienated from all observance of religion by their squalid condition, and their children are deprived of education. If they could be suddenly thrown loose, as in the French Revolution, with what a dreadful fury would they rush on the proud, splendid, sumptuous ranks that have been treading them to the earth. It will, after all, be strange if the cup of bitterness shall not yet come round to them even in this world. . . . One goes fully along with the animated spirit of the Anti-Corn-law League; confident that they are working a commotion, before which monopoly will be prostrated at no far-off time. It will be interesting to have the collective manifestation, in their grand meetings of this week, of the effects already produced, and the plans and means for prosecuting and extending the war. . . .

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CCXXX. TO MRS. HALBROOKE.

*Stapleton, near Bristol, March 30, 1843.*

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—For it is a long, long time to look back upon since the friendship was *young*,—I was exceedingly gratified at receiving your letter—dilatory as I have been in acknowledging it, and as I am in every thing I ought to do with dispatch. It was a strange and pleasing surprise to see at the end of it the name of *Fanny Purser*. It gratified me that the said Fanny Purser should, through so wide an interval, have remembered me with so kind a feeling as should induce her to write to me. This feeling was excited by the mere sight of the *name*; and it became

quite animated as I read the friendly sentiments expressed in the letter. I could not have flattered myself that I had been so well, so long, and so very kindly remembered. Dear Fanny, it truly is a very cordial as well as unexpected gratification.

What a distant retrospect, and how many remembrances and associations—your excellent parents,—Henry Strahan,—Mrs. Butler,—our talks and amusements,—the places and change of habitations,—your brother a boy,—yourself a girl, hardly fifteen perhaps, the last time that I saw you. In the case of your brother, when I heard from him at an advanced period of life, I was wondering what manner of personal appearance he might have grown and passed into, in the course of so many years, while I could not bring him to my mind in any other image than that only one which I so well remembered; and even after seeing him at last, I remained in a kind of baffle between that perfectly preserved image, and his actual appearance as a more than middle-aged man. Of you also, I can have only the one image in my mind; and I am thinking and wondering what would be the difference, if the present reality were to appear before me. In *him* I did descry some trace of the original aspect, under the vast difference. If I had a like opportunity I should be interested and curious in making such inspection and comparison in the case of his sister. It really does seem something strange to think of Fanny as a grand-mother! What a succession of broad stages one has to imagine between! So many individual and social changes, so many deliberations, determinations, movements, occupations, duties, cares, pleasing and painful experiences. So many dispensations of Providence, so many occasions for relying on that Providence, so many times and subjects for serious reflection, so many, and some of them severe, lessons of instructive experience. It would be interesting to hear you tell the difference between your youthful anticipations of life, and your views of it as resulting from what you have experienced and witnessed in the progress through so long an interval. What is the difference in this respect between yourself and your daughter? Have you occasion sometimes to smile at the promises with which she hears the future flattering her? Have you to say to her—"My dear child,

you will find it out in due time?" Is she incredulous, sometimes, to what you have to tell her from having had so many more reflections, and feelings, and trials? But perhaps she is not of a sanguine temperament, and I am very willing to believe that you are not of a gloomy one, notwithstanding the share that has been appointed you of mournful experience. I rejoice to see you in possession of the one grand resource against both the ills of life and the fear of death; and that you share this happiness with your daughter and her husband. In respect to this great interest you have the happiness to be as in communion with those who have gone before you, your estimable parents, and with the remaining estimable relation, your brother. The time is hastening on when that communion will be wholly translated to a happier world, and there exalted and perpetuated. I pray that I may not myself be wanting to it.

It is highly gratifying to think of your brother (the *boy* in my tenacious imagination), so worthy in character, so favoured in his course of life, and so singularly happy in his family—I think beyond any other example that I have known; for, as you say, *all* his children seem to be such as he would desire. I hope *their* descendants will be such as to bring no unfavourable change into the history of the family.

I was expressing some small degree of wonder that, on the loss of him who had been the cause of your leaving Ireland, you had not been disposed to return; when he plainly indicated how you had stronger reasons to remain where you have found a little circle of friendly, social interests. Over every interest there must have spread a gloomy shade, for the present and some time past, in your town and neighbourhood, from the fearful state of suffering and disturbance. . . .

I should greatly like to see you; I should, as in the case of your brother, fix and settle in my mind and imagination *who you are*; for I find myself addressing an *equivocal somebody* between the good, pleasing little girl Fanny Purser, and a certain sedate, matronly personage, a grandmother of the age of fifty-seven. I hope many years are yet to be added to that account, *moderately* happy, and finally concluding in something incomparably happier than any thing on earth.

I will repeat how very greatly I am gratified by your kind letter; and shall be so again if at any time you shall feel disposed to favour me. I wish you had mentioned the remembered things that you say "would have made me smile." It would have been very curious to see whether my own very miserable memory had retained them. It does retain many particulars of those remote times, and some of them vividly.

My dear Fanny, as I like to call you, I commend you and yours to our heavenly Father; and repeat to you how truly I am your cordial and much gratified friend,

J. FOSTER.

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CCXXXI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Monday Evening, 1843.*

. . . . We are not to be suffered to go to sleep, like our forefathers in the dull quiet of their times. We should be able to live on "agitation,"—for we are to have nothing else. The Corn-law agitation—Education agitation—Puseyism agitation—Scotch church agitation—and, most portentous of all, Irish agitation. One cannot yet believe that the government will persist in the education scheme, in defiance of a vaster number of petitions (the Speaker has said) than ever crowded in on any former occasion, and nearly all on one side. If the thing really is, after all, to be forced through, on the strength of a besotted and unprincipled majority, it will have the good effect of embodying and embattling the dissenters (in which they have been deficient) to a degree never yet approached. And it will no longer allow them to be *numerically* underrated, as they have constantly and wilfully been hitherto by the church party. It is sadly to be feared that the Methodists will have forfeited the favour into which they have latterly been growing, and are very desirous to grow, with that party. . . . The Anti-corn-law [league],—an admirable organ and system of agitation, which will doubtless be successful at no distant time. The Irish affair is formidable and alarming; *can* it end otherwise than in some

fearful catastrophe? The object is surely wild and impracticable; but the prodigious national excitement—resisted, defied, and still more inflamed, what form of action will or can it take to come to any definite issue? It cannot be persuaded, legislated, or threatened, into quiet surrender. And if so, what is there for it but a wide, sanguinary, military execution, followed by all kinds of oppression, and an implacable, ever-burning hatred? . . . .

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## CCXXXII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

1843.

. . . . No doubt you have seen a petition, in pathetic terms, in behalf of the *Scotch Church*, adopted by the *élite* of the Sanhedrim. One would have given something much more considerable than the “smallest coin of the realm” to overhear the consultation. How comes the Scotch church to be any thing to *them*? While not a hoof of them is admissible into *any* establishment, and while their sect hardly makes any way in Scotland, are they so besotted to the principle of ecclesiastical establishments that they can *nowhere* see without horror the signs of their decline, lest, before the time for effecting their *own* establishment, the whole thing should have gone out of the world?

One shall await with great curiosity the upshot of that Scotch business. I have much distrusted the heroics of it from the first. Just now they *seem* as if coming up to the mark. But last week there was here an intelligent Scotch presbyterian, who greatly doubted whether more than the merest scantling of the pledged 500 would be the self-exiles out of the land of Canaan. The ministry, it seems, are willing to concede some inconsiderable point, on a question “*quod sacra*” (which I cannot understand), and he thinks that, affecting to regard this as a great concession, they will contrive to find it both conscientious and *prudent* to stay where they are. He observed, what is self-evident enough, in what a most desolate condition very many of the poorer ministers and parishes must fall into, if practically persisting in the recusancy. At all events, however, he said, a

great and irreparable damage will have been done to that establishment. The kirk must regard this shock of earthquake as a warning intimation of more to come, and an ultimate downfall. As a hastening of that catastrophe, I have been wishing, all along, that the malcontents *might* persist and complete their rebellion.

The two sisterly churches ought to sympathize; for our own is going fast to an opprobrious plight. It will be some time before the dissenters will hear again of the grand boast that the purpose and the *effect* of the establishment is to preserve the integrity and *uniformity* of the faith among the people. There are the old standard formalist body—the evangelicals—the Puseyites,—the last according to all reports, making a triumphant progress. It is really quite time for the Methodist magnates to get up *another* petition—a passionate entreaty that something may be done or tried to save the *English* church from ruin. But, as in the case of Baal's worshippers, nobody will stir. Bishops, with small exceptions, seem determined, or at least content, to doze in their mitres. The inferior dignitaries must nod acquiescence, such of them as are not themselves in the movement; and statesmen have something else to look after. The dissenters may look on, delighted at the disturbance and peril of what has been continually boasted as built on a rock.

Something is to be attempted for *education*; but one can have no faith in its compass or efficacy. It will be a church business from top to bottom—if indeed it be done at all. The accounts (which seem to have suggested the scheme) of the condition of the labouring classes, are horrid enough, in all respects, physical, mental, and moral. In their present physical state there *can* be no education. Creatures starving, in dirty rags, and herded in loathsome huts and cellars, are in no state for intellectual cultivation.

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## COXXXIII. TO JOSEPH COTTLE, ESQ.

June 22, 1843.

Past the longest day! The thought strikes once more into the mind, how *desperately* rapid the flight of time! The *shortest* day hangs on my memory as if it were but a few weeks back. To a certainty, and at the very utmost reckoning, how few times more shall we pass either of these marked points of time. How soon after the entrance on Eternity will these little marks and measures of Time cease to be of any account—unless perhaps, and possibly, they be noted and numbered by us in reference to the succession of events in the world we shall have left, on supposition, not improbable, that information of those events will be brought to the inhabitants of the other world;—or in reference to the predicted periods of the future events in the great progress of the Divine Government on earth, looking on to the conclusion. As prophecy has disclosed *something* of this great scheme for our information and instruction while we stay here, is it not probable that prophecy will exhibit those futurities with a stronger light to the happy and enlightened spirits in the higher regions?

## COXXXIV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

August 31, 1843.

. . . . . After this proposed excursion you will have to think of preparing once more to sit down for the *winter*—unwelcome name and thing! I hope you have a thorough pleasant apartment for fire, candle, books, and Catherine; the last as indispensable (and *that is saying much*) as the first. But what would you do in the supposed quandary—you shall pass a whole rigorous week in winter without fire, or without Catherine? I see you will neatly evade the question, by saying that, by the supposition, the infliction of the cold on yourself, would be its infliction on Catherine also, and that this would be a piece of unpardonable barbarity.

You never name any thing you have been reading.



Among your heaps you doubtless have *Wilberforce's* noted book ;—and I may presume you have read it some time or other, though I never did, but very partially, till within these few weeks. Superfluous to say it is a work of great value ; faithful to a high standard of the Christian doctrine and morals, searching and courageous to expose a fearful prevalence of real and fatal irreligion under the Christian name and formalities. His fellow politicians must have been strangely astounded at the appearance of such a prodigy in their hemisphere. . . .

Here the weather for some days past has been of very inauspicious omen for the harvest. How disastrous if it should continue so, and inflict the completing aggravation to the miseries of the people. . . . While the people are in such misery, their legislators are gaily scattering over the country for their rural festivities, their field sports, their watering places, their excursions to all parts of the Continent, totally reckless of the people and the national interests.

I see in the Morning Chronicle to-day that you have got Rebecca at your gates ; a commotion that seems to laugh all your wise-acres to scorn. I suppose it is quite evident, as I have seen stated, it arose as a reaction against a wicked management of 'squires, magistrates, &c., to lighten the tolls on the great roads where their equipages rolled along, and lay them, in monstrous disproportion on the secondary and cross roads chiefly used by farmers and tradesmen. For these it was in vain to remonstrate, and appeal to magistracy, law, and so forth ; and therefore it was quite time for them to take the law into their own hands. They commit much injustice in their turn ; still the probability is, that the result at last will be a much more equitable apportionment of the road-tax, and a mortifying conviction in the *higher folk* that they are really not to have every thing their own way. . . .

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## CCXXXV. TO SIR JOHN EASTHOPE, BART., M.P.

*Stapleton, Thursday, October 3, 1843.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . . Short as is the interval since I wrote, it has made a material change in my condition. I adverted to the plainly approaching termination of life, and perhaps named a year or two. But the indications have latterly become so express, that I now have not the smallest expectation of surviving a very few months. The great and pressing business is, therefore, to prepare for the event. That is, in truth, our great business always; but it is peculiarly enforced in a situation like mine. It involves a review of past life; and oh how much there is to render reflection painful and alarming! Such a review would consign me to utter despair, but for my firm belief in the all-sufficiency of the mediation of our Lord. . . . .

My very dear friend, make the one thing needful the great practical object. Accept this simple wish; I feel my mind quite incapable of seeking any thing more interesting to say to you.

I rather hope you will be still prevented coming hither. I can hardly say I should be glad to see you. I cannot maintain any length of talking, its effect is so mischievous on the cough, and in other ways.

I will not *yet* say, farewell.

J. FOSTER.

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CCXXXVI. TO SIR JOHN EASTHOPE, BART., M.P.

*Stapleton, Oct. 5, 1843.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—A note received from you through the hands of — expresses a wish for an interview, on condition that it might not injuriously effect the extreme debility into which I am rapidly sunk.

I say *rapidly*; for it can be but few weeks since I spoke of a few months as likely to bring the conclusion. In a later letter I may have narrowed the interval. But *now*

my report would be, that I cannot think it possible to survive many days.

In such a state of prostration, it is impossible for me to hold any communication for more than a very brief space of time. . . . The case being such, my dear friend, I do think it will be better to decline the interview, so acceptable as it would have been in other circumstances.

Before you will have returned from the Continent I shall have made a much greater and more mysterious journey.—After some years, I wish they may not be few, you will be called to follow me. And may God grant, through the infinite merits of Christ, that we may find ourselves in a far happier world.—Among my last good wishes will be those for the happiness, and the *piety* of all your family. . . .

And now, my dear friend, I commend you to the God of mercy, and very affectionately bid you

FAREWELL.

## CHAPTER X.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS ON MR. FOSTER'S  
CHARACTER.

WITHOUT any attempt at a formal and critical delineation of Mr. Foster's character, it may render the materials for making such an estimate more complete, to present a few particulars relative to his private habits and tastes, which could not be conveniently interwoven with the preceding narrative.

His intense sympathy with nature appears to have been first awakened by the grand and awful,\* but as his faculties matured the love and admiration of the beautiful became not less vivid. He took great delight in all flowers, but especially in the more delicate, retiring, and minute. In the spring he anxiously watched for the appearance of the first snow-drop, crocus, primrose, or buttercup; this last, indeed, he regarded with a feeling more of sadness than of pleasure, from its betokening the far advance of the season. Sometimes, on returning from a walk he would say in a tone of concern, "I've seen a fearful sight to-day;—I've seen a buttercup!" He scarcely ever gathered any flowers, disliking to occasion their premature decay.†

He felt a delight, amounting almost to fascination, in colours of all kinds, whether delicate tints, dazzling showy colours, or deep sombre hues.

He had great susceptibility to the "skyey influences,"

\* Vide vol. i. p. 4

† "The enthusiast for Nature is sorry to see any of her works destroyed. He is almost sorry to crush a fungus."—*Journal*, No. 103.

and often remarked how much less any given space of time was worth in dreary, inclement weather. He used to say that it depressed all his faculties, independently of the low temperature.

He did not possess any scientific acquaintance with music, for which he had no ear; yet was passionately fond of some kinds of it, especially of the mournful and solemn. He used to wonder that it should be thought impossible for a person who, technically speaking, had no ear, to feel an interest in music, and strongly asserted the power it could exercise over himself to inspire almost every description of sentiment. He was never tired of hearing anything that pleased him, but would ask for it again and again. He felt more interested in instrumental than in vocal music, and his favourite instrument was the organ.

In connexion with his taste for graphical works,\* may be noticed, the costly binding he bestowed upon them. His directions to the binder were given with a minute exactness which showed a familiarity with the processes of the art, and great taste in the ornamental adjustments; this was only one mode of gratifying his perception of the beautiful, and arose in no degree from a fondness for display. Indeed, he preferred that elegant works should be kept out of sight, till wanted for particular inspection. One day, noticing that several volumes had been placed on a table so as to show their exterior to the greatest advantage, he playfully said, "*I'd put those books somewhere else; I've a proud modesty that disdains show.*"

He had a great dislike to fancy-work as a sad misappropriation of time. Once when shown a piece of worsted work with a great deal of red in it, he said "it was red with the blood of murdered time." In household furniture, though from motives of economy he would have studied the

\* Vide Letters civ. clvii. clxxviii. ccxxi.

utmost plainness, yet he also thought that taste was wasted when carried to any great extent on such things.\*

His humanity to animals was great;† and it might as justly be affirmed of him as of another venerable person, that "his sensibility produced a quick and powerful sympathy with the whole circle of animated nature."‡ Of this the following is an instance. He once found a small bat in the garden whose wing had been injured sufficiently to prevent its flying, and yet not so much, but that he thought it might recover in a little time. He therefore brought it within doors, fitted up a box for it, and put it in his study that it might be out of the way of molestation, intending

\* "Astonished at the measure of attention and talk devoted to the *little ware* of life. What tiresome length of disquisition about furniture, dress, ornaments of the wall or chimney! Life is a journey; and to pass it thus is as if a traveller consumed all his attention on his mode of *stepping*, and on all the pebbles and prints of feet along the way."—*Journal*, No. 683.

† "Compassion for the suffering of the animal tribes is likely to be greatly injured in London, by the constant sight of the condition and treatment of horses, particularly those of the hackney-coaches, and of the stage-coaches from the villages and towns in the neighbourhood of the city. . . . You have seen these ill-fated creatures, old, blind, ill-fed, wounded by the harness, and panting for life, yet suffering all the execrable barbarity of wretches in the form of men, but with the spirit and language of hell. . . . This is a bad world for whatever is innocent and useful, if it be defenceless too. This spectacle is continually witnessed, and deemed too trivial for feeling or abhorrence, except in some singularly atrocious instances. Introduce the topic if you please, in a polished company, and see how many persons will attach the smallest importance to a consideration which appears to me so interesting to humanity. I have known the whole subject turned to ridicule by persons, whom I had not, till then, deemed altogether destitute of feeling. This insensibility to obvious and multiplied animal suffering must surely be the result of familiarly seeing it. But a city residence ought to make no trifling compensation to the qualities of the heart, in some other way, for such a serious deduction from its capability of feeling compassion. Let it be considered too that the same cause early produces the same insensibility in the minds of children; how different a process from the discipline requisite to produce that anxious and sacred tenderness to feeling, that fear of hurting what has life, which a completely thoughtful and humane parent would be solicitous to cultivate in the young mind in precedence to every other moral principle, inasmuch as cruelty is the most hateful of all the possible forms of depravity."—*Mr. Foster to Miss M. Snooke, April 2, 1803.*

‡ HALL'S Funeral Sermon for DR. RYLAND.—*Works*, i. 395.

to keep it there till it should be able to fly again. However, he soon found that there was no chance of its recovery, and thought it more humane to destroy it.

He was remarkable for civility and kindness to small tradesmen and work-people; he used to complain that women were generally underpaid, and would often give them more than they asked. He abhorred driving a bargain with poor persons. When sometimes shown small wares brought to the door for sale, on being told the price, he would say, "Oh, give them a few pence more;—see—there's a great deal of work here; it must have taken some time to make." And he would turn the article whatever it might be, in every direction, and find out all the little ingenuities or ornaments about it. With regard to persons serving in shops he was very considerate, and would insist on the impropriety of occasioning needless trouble to them in showing their goods, or in sending small purchases to a distance. He has been known to go back to a shop, and pay something more for what he thought had been sold to him too cheaply. "It isn't often we meet with persons that do that, Sir," was the remark of a young woman on his turning back, and paying a shilling more for a lithograph which he had just bought.

He always spoke with great charity of the minor offences—particularly petty thefts committed by persons decent and honest in the main, when under the hard pressure of poverty. If anything of the sort were mentioned to him in a tone of condemnation, he would generally say, "one has great compassion for persons in such a miserable condition,"—"one deeply deplores that decent people should be driven to such straits,"—or something to that effect.

If he had been told of persons in peculiar distress, though he had scarcely any personal acquaintance with them, or even knew them only by name, he seemed constantly to

keep them in remembrance, would often inquire after them, and make evident allusions to them in his family prayers. His delicate regard to the feelings of others was most exemplary, in rendering acts of kindness and benevolence, especially of a pecuniary kind. He endeavoured in some ingenious manner to make it appear that he was the favoured person, so sedulous was he not to excite a painful sense of obligation. From an over-anxiety on this point he sought to prevent if possible, the expressions of gratitude from reaching him. During his residence at Frome, in visiting the poor members of his congregation, he commonly took a small parcel of tea, with him, requesting them to make him a good cup; and on leaving, would adroitly slide half-a-crown under his saucer. On one occasion when he had transmitted, quite spontaneously and unexpectedly, a handsome donation to a person in a respectable station, but with limited means, he added a "most peremptory injunction that he might never be *mortified*, by one syllable or hint, in any way or time, of acknowledgment for so mere a trifle."

He was extremely quick in appreciating every little proof of recollection and regard which was shown him by his friends. Small presents, snuff-boxes and the like, he used to set a great value on. He generally had two or three in use at the same time, and now and then would put one back in the drawer where they were kept, and bring out another, so that all might come into use. All kind letters and messages seemed to have a more than ordinary value in his estimation.

On being first introduced to him, a stranger would be struck with the unostentatious and perfectly simple address—the familiar idiomatic phrases—the deep and almost muffled tone of voice, and the occasional searching glance cast over the spectacles from eyes "charged with thought"—the whole manner and posture indicating habitual medi-



tativeness. In large mixed companies he was not very ready to converse. It was mostly in the presence of two or three friends that the energy, originality, and varied opulence of his mind, were disclosed. Those who listened to him obtained not the mere knowledge of facts or arguments, but were trained to view men and things in their higher and more spiritual relations. On topics which lie within the province of the understanding rather than of sentiment or feeling, nothing crude or vague satisfied his mind; and thus while intent on obtaining clear views himself, he unconsciously disciplined those who conversed with him to aim at a similar precision of thought.

Though he was not remarkable for a mere verbal memory, he had at command an ample assemblage of facts supplied by his extensive reading. On one occasion he had been silent in a circle where there had been a long and unsatisfactory debate on mummies. At length he came out with a few quiet interrogations, and the disputants soon found they had been exposing their shallowness to one who, as a person present remarked, seemed as if he had made this topic the study of his life; in fact, his information respecting it *was* very extensive, and it would be hardly possible to express too strongly the degree of interest which he took in this class of antiquities. "*Ancient Egypt*," he remarks in one of his reviews, "surpasses every tract of the world (we know not that Palestine is an exception), in the power of fascinating a contemplative spirit." This was eminently the case with himself.

At another time a missionary from the South Sea Islands called upon him, who had been previously complaining of the scanty acquaintance with the history and geography of these regions, evinced by some who were esteemed highly literary men and accomplished scholars. But in Mr. Foster's company he had such questions put and information

given, that he came away with a humiliating impression of his own comparative ignorance.

Mr. Foster seldom, if ever, indulged in verbal wit. He once called the world "an untamed and untameable animal;" and on being reminded that he was a part of it, and therefore had an interest in its welfare, rejoined, "Yes, sir, a hair upon the tail." On insincerity, affectation, and cant, he was unsparingly sarcastic. Some years ago, the Emperor Alexander's piety was a favourite theme at public meetings. A person who received the statements on this point with (as Foster thought) a far too easy faith, remarked to him, that really the Emperor must be a very good man! "Yes, sir," he replied gravely, but with a significant glance, "a *very* good man—very devout; no doubt he said grace before he swallowed Poland!"\*

"His inclination ever led him," it has been remarked by an able observer, "to what was real and tangible in thought, to the rejection of all discussions which had no more than a merely logical and metaphysical interest to recommend them. He could not dispense with having distinct sensuous conceptions, and with this predominant bias it would have been strange indeed if he had taken up with ardour the study of the scholastic authors, or the merely ratiocinative class of metaphysicians. Yet this did not infer an exclusive devotion to the practical; on the contrary, he loved to expatiate in speculations,† respecting, for example, the future state, where the understanding can find no secure footing, and where the practical interest is certainly very small. But he must have before his mind what was real either in actual

\* Of one of his acquaintances he remarked, "Young Mr. — is so unanimated, so irresolute, you would think he had been studying the subject of non-existence a whole year."

† "The mind loves universal liberty; and if it were to arrive at the solemn ridge of mountains which we may fancy to bound creation, it would ask eagerly,—Why no further? What is there beyond?"—*Journal*, No. 48.

fact, or imagination; the mere beings of the reason (*entia rationalia*) he could not fail to regard with an indifference, which, in the eyes of Plato, would have cut him off from all title to the name of philosopher. In this respect there seems to be a singular contrast between Mr. Foster and the sublime genius of Athens. And yet, so eager was Mr. Foster in speculating upon the prospect of man beyond the grave, that, very possibly, if he had not possessed the unspeakable blessing of a Divine revelation, he likewise would have applied, as Plato felt himself impelled to do, the levers and screws, and all other conceivable machines of dialectic reasoning, if peradventure he might thereby succeed in wrenching from Nature a secret, which she had locked up so securely, but which he felt to be of such paramount interest. . . . Perhaps he may be described as the Platonic Socrates, without his truly Hellenic faculty and passion for mere logical disquisition."

Allied to this tendency to indulge in musings and questionings on the state after death, was Mr. Foster's disposition to listen to accounts of supernatural appearances; in which his belief was very decided. Not that he received them without a cautious and minute examination of the evidence in their favour; but there was manifestly an earnest longing, not unmixed with hope, that a ray of light might, from this quarter, gleam across the "shaded frontier." The belief in the heightened and conscious existence of the soul in an intermediate state, he held with great firmness, and would have thought it an unfavourable indication in any one to maintain the contrary opinion.

In reference to his general habits in social and domestic life, it has been most justly said, "There it is that moral worth is seen; and there it shone forth in this tender, beloved parent; this kind-hearted master; this disinterested adviser; this cordial friend; this generous benefactor; this

man of warm heart and kindly feelings, whatever his exterior may have indicated; of condescension to his inferiors; of simple honesty in his purposes; and of straightforwardness in his movements; this great man, with many peculiarities, but no littlenesses, who beheld all the airs of assumed greatness with utter scorn; this man of genuine refinement of mind, his whole conduct manifesting a delicate regard for the feelings of others, and that spirit of accommodation which made him willingly sacrifice, and even resolutely abstain from, comforts which he could not enjoy without occasioning some trouble to those who surrounded him, especially if they were beneath him in station—carrying this sensitive, scrupulous regard for others, and disregard of himself, to an extent which was painful to those who loved him.

“ . . . His disposition was unresentful. He felt warmly, and even indignantly, when taking the part which he deemed incumbent upon him in a righteous cause—in defending the injured; in resisting what he deemed unjust; and exposing what to his eye was dishonourable;—but he thus felt and acted for others. In what had relation simply to himself, he felt it beneath him to cherish an unforgiving, revengeful temper. He excited strong attachment, but he encountered little personal enmity, for it was not his habit to indulge it himself. At the same time, he was ready to act as a mediator, and was glad to heal differences, taking sometimes an active part in the exercise of Christian charity. Those who were young felt his condescending attentions. At the annual examinations in the Baptist College, his candour was always discernible, not less than the deep interest and fixed attention manifest in his manner. His sincere regard for the welfare of the young men, and his sympathy towards them, have left a lasting impression on the minds of many.

".... There was an appearance of misanthropy in the tone in which he would sometimes speak of men in general, and of the state of the world. But it was an appearance only. He saw the debasement of human nature, and deeply deplored it; and if his views of mankind were gloomy—formed, as they were, under the guidance of divine truth, and with the discernment of a keen observer—yet they were those of a compassionate spirit. ....

"Such was he to his fellow men. Before God, he deeply abased himself. He saw 'Him who is invisible;' and in such a mind as his, the contrast of infinite grandeur and excellence with mere nothingness and pollution, would present itself in a vivid light to his intellectual vision. But with him, this humbling view of himself became a deeply penetrating emotion;\* and it seemed to him not less preposterous than impious to assume any other posture than that of deep abasement before Him 'whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain;' and 'in whose sight the heavens are not clean.' "†

\* "... The omens and admonition of death, as at a very short distance at the utmost, press upon me with solemn force. I was exceedingly struck lately with those formidable words of our Lord—'Ye shall die in your sins.' Oh what emphatic, what vehement earnestness is due to the object of escaping that fearful doom!—surrounded, loaded, clung to, by this your own inseparable property; the only thing you take with you into the other world.

"This time I let the national affairs alone, though they inevitably come into almost every conversation, because they spread over the great community as a dark and portentous hemisphere. There seems to be a general impression on thoughtful and even unthinking minds, that the days of public tranquillity are far off, and that great calamities are to be expected in the interval. Happy those who are not to be detained from a 'better country' to witness and suffer them. I was greatly interested last evening by the account of a pious young woman in the neighbourhood, who is dying of a distressing and incurable disease, and who anxiously, but submissively, counts the very few days which it is thought possible she may live;—hardly more than a week. An object of envy!"—*Mr. Foster to the Rev. Josiah Hill, August 1, 1843.*

† *On seeing Him who is Invisible*; a Sermon occasioned by the death of the Rev. John Foster, preached at Broadmead, Bristol, Oct. 22, 1843, by THOS. S. CRISP, pp. 27—31.

Those who enjoyed frequent opportunities of intercourse with Mr. Foster could not avoid being impressed by the extraordinary *unworldliness* which pervaded his character, and imparted to it an indescribable dignity; nor can the readers of these volumes have failed to notice how early he habituated himself to those views of human life which formed and cherished this noble peculiarity. The direct influence of Christianity in producing such a state of mind is forcibly described in a passage of his *Essays*, which will be a suitable conclusion to the present biography.

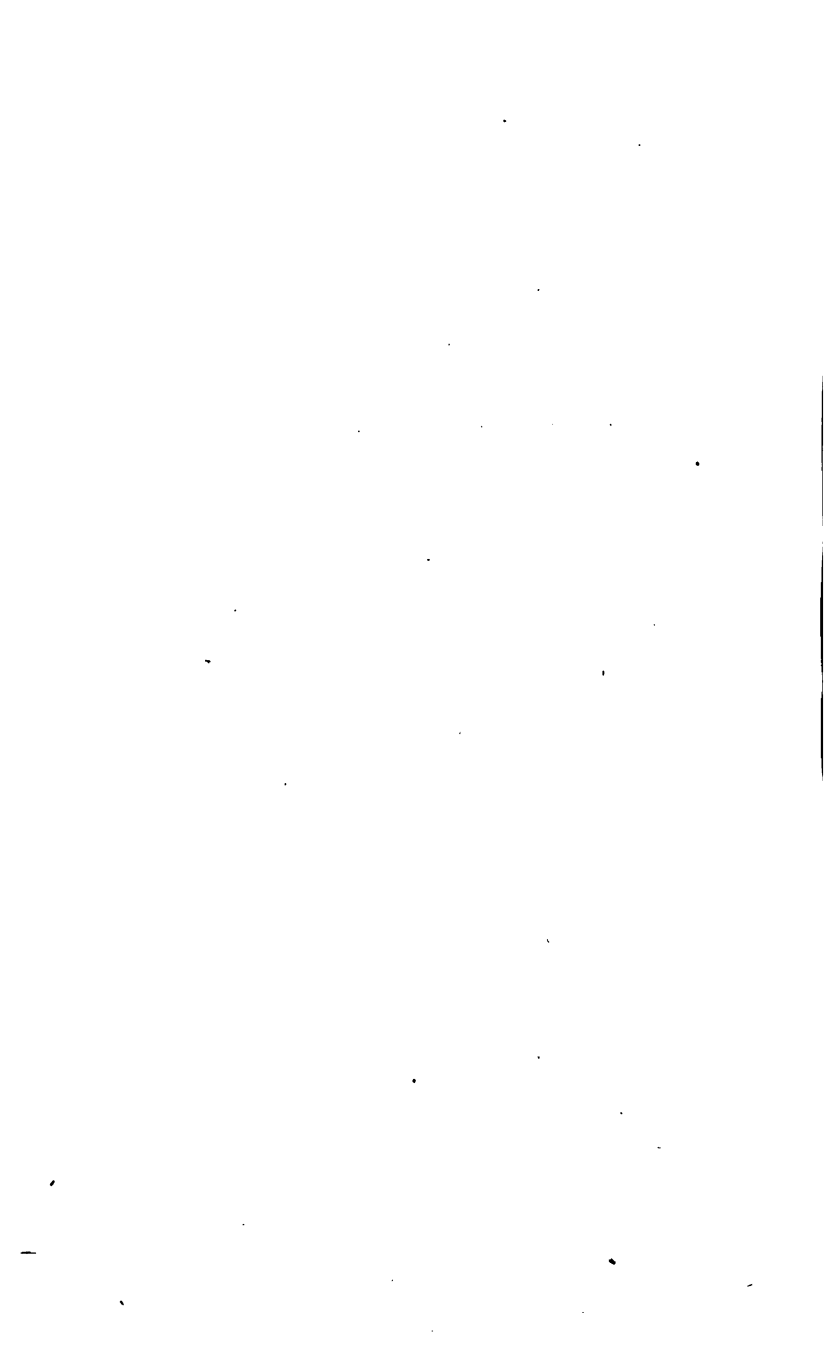
"It is a prominent characteristic of the Christian Revelation, that, having declared this life to be but the introduction to another, it systematically preserves the recollection of this great truth through every representation of every subject; so that the reader is not allowed to contemplate any of the interests of life in a view which detaches them from the grand object and conditions of life itself. An apostle could not address his friends on the most common concerns, for the length of a page, without the final references. He is like a person whose eye, while he is conversing with you about an object, or a succession of objects, immediately near, should glance every moment toward some great spectacle appearing on the distant horizon. He seems to talk to his friends in somewhat of that manner of expression with which you can imagine that Elijah spoke, if he remarked to his companion any circumstance in the journey from Bethel to Jericho, and from Jericho to the Jordan; a manner betraying the sublime anticipation which was pressing on his thoughts. *The correct consequence of conversing with our Lord and his apostles would be, that the thought of IMMORTALITY should become almost as habitually present and familiarized to the mind as the countenance of a domestic friend; that it should be the grand test of the value of all pursuits, friendships, and speculations; and that it should mingle a certain nobleness with everything which it permitted to occupy our time.*" \*

\* On the Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion. Letter viii.

**NOTICES OF MR. FOSTER,**  
**AS A**  
**PREACHER AND A COMPANION:**  
**IN**  
**A LETTER**  
**TO THE**  
**EDITOR OF HIS LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE.**

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**BY JOHN SHEPPARD,**  
*Author of "Thoughts on Private Devotion," &c. &c.*





## NOTICES,

ETC.

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MY DEAR SIR,—In attempting compliance with a request from the family of our departed instructor and friend, I choose the form of a letter to you; both as giving occasion for the cordial expression of my esteem, and best suited to the mere sketches or glimpses which I have to offer; since any strictness in style or unity of method would be scarcely in accordance with materials so very slight and incomplete.

A glance at two or three pages in the manuscript of those detached thoughts which form an unexpected addition to the literary relics of our lamented friend, and previous acquaintance with a few only of the letters probable to appear in your collection, have shown me that the revered writer is in them his own best biographer. Such indeed—where Christian sincerity of character exists—must be the case always, as to real development of mind and feelings; the more so likewise, in proportion as the traits of these have been deep, refined, and, in a great measure, latent.

I am conscious, therefore, that this attempt might very well be spared: for even if it be found to delineate some features of our friend's character not untruly, his own pen will have given us these, undesignedly, with touches far more correct and vivid.

This remark does not apply either to your consecutive

detail of the facts of his life, or to the reflections which will be suggested to you by a careful examination of his manuscripts and correspondence. All that I can hope to present in addition to these, is a scanty remainder of impressions made on myself, chiefly at a period very long gone by, from the intercourse, teachings, and ministrations, of a "highly esteemed" pastor. Even in these, however strong at the time, there must be a dimness which I regret, from the lapse of years, and a memory not retentive.

Yet I feel that since our friend's decease, the re-perusal of parts of his correspondence, converse with those who shared his society, and recurrence to his published writings, have all conduced, like the means sometimes employed for freshening and reviving old pictures, to bring out those clouded and faded impressions somewhat more clearly.

I look back forty years, and in seriously doing this perceive that our "tale" of those days, and of the long subsequent interval, however swiftly reviewed in mere outline, can never be really "told," except in the awfully revealing and judicial day-light that draws near. It is (within a few months) exactly forty years ago,\* that I first saw our departed friend, arriving as a guest to my valued uncle, and at table with my still nearer relatives, long since vanished also. That retrospect affectingly verifies and illustrates what I find noted by me from a discourse of his in 1805, on Ezekiel vii. 10,—“The time will arrive for each to say, Behold the day is come to sink from health and enjoyment into suffering; behold the morning is come which deprives me of that friend who was, as it were, the morning light to me.” Being then only eighteen years old, and, while fond of books, very little acquainted with lettered or highly intellectual society, I was of course much impressed and deeply interested,—even after high expectations previously

\* From 1844, when this letter was written.

raised,—by the acute sense, prompt imagination, extensive reading, and various talent of our visitor.

On the then recent resignation of their pastor, correspondence had been held between my nearest connexions and the late venerable Robert Hall; a letter from whom (Dec. 26, 1803) names “Mr. Foster, of Downend near Bristol,” as “a young man of the most original and extraordinary genius, of unexceptionable character, of the most amiable temper,” and suggests “That as he is probably at liberty, it may be thought fit to apply to him.”

Our much esteemed friend (my own kind counsellor through many subsequent years), the late Mr. William Tomkins, of Abingdon, who had known Mr. Foster at Downend, wrote, “His conduct has been, I believe, not only irreproachable, but every way consistent with his profession; his situation far from a lucrative one, but his mind of that cast that feels no uneasiness on this head, if his corporeal wants are barely supplied. Both places were well filled when I heard him, and it is said, notwithstanding the extreme sublimity of his ideas, the common people are very fond of him. This I account for from the great simplicity (not lowness) of his style. I cannot say whether he is likely to raise a congregation; he seems to me a *unique* in all his exercises, social and public; and it may be difficult to calculate upon the acceptance and usefulness of his labours or otherwise. Much must depend upon taste. He has the most fertile mind, accompanied, I am told, with a very benevolent heart.”

These communications induced a request on the part of the church,\* that Mr. Hall would solicit Mr. Foster’s ministerial aid at Frome. His reply, after ascertaining Mr. F.’s willingness to visit us, (Feb. 1840,) confirmed the preceding statements as follows:—“His manner is not very

\* Worshipping in Sheppard’s Barton Meeting-house, Frome.

popular, but his conceptions are most extraordinary and original; his disposition very amiable, his piety unquestionable, and his sentiments moderately orthodox—about the level of Watts and Doddridge, which, if I am not mistaken, are pretty congenial with those of the Frome society. He holds the mediation and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ most strenuously, without which an angel from heaven would, in my opinion, do no good as a minister. I ardently wish Mr. Foster may be approved among you, and be the means of bringing many sons to glory.”

Mr. Foster's visit took place in the same month, and his settlement as pastor shortly followed. During the first weeks of his stay he became my good father's guest, and a pleasing reference to our dwelling, in which he then sojourned, occurs in a letter of his to my dear mother.

Through those weeks, while the forthcoming essayist enlivened the social hours of our family, his retired hours were occupied by that work which soon after procured him so high and wide estimation. It was, however, as far as I remember, little, if at all, spoken of; as indeed, from those characteristics of the writer to which I shall ere long advert, it was very unlikely to be.

Our friend's conversation thus freely and advantageously enjoyed, together with his public ministry, opened, as it were, to my inexperience and curiosity, a new intellectual region. Yet the impression of his talents was less forcible than that combined with it of his “kindness” and “humbleness of mind.” Nor did this arise primarily from his more general demeanour, which could as yet be little observed, but from a home instance suited both to affect and admonish me. My beloved mother, with no deficiency of good sense or taste, had a mind susceptible of quick and tender emotion, and often too much swayed by anxious fears. Being more provided with ideas than with courage or command or

words fluently and aptly to express them, a sort of hesitancy and conscious imperfection very often appeared in her conversation. Perceiving, doubtless, the good influence, both spiritual and intellectual, which her guest might exercise on those most dear to herself, it was natural that he should receive a somewhat peculiar share of her hospitable attention. Yet it was not this, I am persuaded, which so much induced especial kindness on his part, as the observation of our dear parent's humble piety, sympathy, simplicity of heart. The way in which this powerful thinker and speaker evinced towards her his marked esteem, was by the utmost patience and courtesy, never treating her hesitation or confused manner with haste, but actually himself often giving completeness in his replies to what might be somewhat brokenly expressed; so that we were used to say in the domestic party, Mr. Foster not only listens kindly to our mother, but is at pains to perfect and illustrate her part in the dialogue.

I was at this time (as ever after while the privilege was granted) an earnest hearer of our new pastor's public addresses. Indeed it is right to state here, as I have to himself in correspondence, that so far as public discourses were made instrumental to implant in me a deep regard for Christian truth, it is to those of Foster I was most consciously indebted. It was not usual with me to attempt taking full notes of his discourses. They ever abounded in thoughts which *excite* thought, and the effort of continuous writing would have diminished, if not marred, the pleasure and profit of mentally revolving what was uttered.

Perhaps if the discriminating hearers of eminent speakers from the pulpit were to note down only those brief passages which they felt to be *most* impressive and useful (and this with the greatest possible exactness), a sort of memorabilia might be preserved, more valuable than some outlines, or

even transcripts of the whole. I regret that my own notes and recollections from our friend's discourses do not possess sufficient accuracy to warrant me in presenting any of them as his.

The sermons of Foster were of a cast quite distinct from what is commonly called oratory, and, indeed, from what many seem to account the highest style of eloquence, namely, a flow of facile thoughts through the smooth channels of uniformly elevated polished diction, graced by the utmost appliances of voice and gesture.

But they possessed for me, and for not a few hearers, qualities and attractions much preferable to these. The basis of important thoughts was as much original or underrived from other minds, as, perhaps, that of any reading man's reflections in our age of books could be; still more so the mode and aspect in which they were presented. That unambitious and homely sort of loftiness, which displayed neither phrase nor speaker, but things,—while the brief word and simple tone brought out the sublime conception “in its clearness;” that fund of varied associations and images by which he really illustrated, not painted or gilded his truths; the graphic master-strokes, the frequent hints of profound suggestion for after-meditation, the cogent though calm expostulations and appeals, the shrewd turns of half-latent irony against irreligion and folly, in which, without any descent from seriousness and even solemnity, the speaker moved a smile by his unconscious approaches to the edge of wit, yet effectually quelled it by the unbroken gravity of his tone and purpose,—all these characteristics had for me an attractive power and value, both by novelty and instructiveness, far above the qualities of an oratory, or eloquence more fashioned on received rules and models. I should scarcely be ready to except in this comparison, as it regarded my personal admiration and improvement, even

the rapid and fervid, yet finished elocution of Hall; though this, as being more popular, while also more critically perfect, was I suppose more generally effective.

How highly it was estimated by our departed friend, appears from his published "Observations on Mr. Hall's Character as a Preacher,"\* and how entirely he disclaimed competition with him in that department, may seem implied in his having declined to continue the week-day lectures, which he had been accustomed for a time to deliver at Broadmead meeting-house, after Mr. Hall succeeded to the pastoral office there.

That these lectures must have been admirably adapted to interest and edify a select auditory, will be very apparent to the readers of a part of the series, which has been published since his decease; and when the warm admirers of his writings have sometimes expressed censure as well as regret, that he did not give more of his thoughts to the press, I think it has not been sufficiently considered how much mental labour was involved in these and other of his preparations for the pulpit. Mr. Foster could do nothing slightly; or without that strenuous application of thought by which, it is too probable, his bodily health was gradually enfeebled.

On the subject of his declining the Broadmead Lectures, I once heard him say, in his facetious mood, "Now Jupiter is come I can try it no more." No doubt the supremacy of Jupiter accorded best in his mind with the claims of Hall; and probably the different allotment of titles made at Lystra did not occur to him.

A comparison, which I confess may appear too far fetched, has often presented itself to my mind, as picturing the differences between the respective style and manner of

\* In ROBERT HALL's Works edited by Dr. Gregory. Vol. VI., pp. 143—148.

these remarkable preachers. On the noble modern road over the Alps, formed by the engineers of Napoleon, one gains here and there a view of that mountain track by which the passage had been made before. In moving quickly up the long traverses and sweeping curves of the new ascent, you trace on some opposite height the short angular zigzags of the path that preceded it. One might compare the eloquence of Hall to this great work; carrying you with ease to the loftiest elevations, winding with a graceful and simple, though elaborate course, amidst varied sublimities, gliding smoothly beside snowy summits where angels would seem to tread, and over gulfs where the voice of the wind or torrent might bring to mind the lamentings of the lost. On the other hand, the eloquence of our more recently departed friend has reminded me of that former mountain road, with its sudden turns of discovery and surprise; bringing us now to the brink of an awful perpendicular, then startling us by the quick descent to a goatherd's quaint dwelling in the glen; advancing along the giddy ledges of a cliff, and then, by a sharp turn, placing us close to some household scene in its recesses. Here, if there were less comprehensive or facile views of the sublime, one had nearer and more astounding glimpses of the inaccessible.

The path came more within the echo of avalanches; and while it oftener passed the chalet and the herd, it sometimes crossed the very inlet to dark untrodden chasms, "which no fowl knoweth." In that original and singular course, the guide, the mule, the litter, were forgotten; nothing was thought of but the grandeur of the mountains and the floods. If the one might be styled a road truly imperial, the other was a path worthy at once of the simplicity of Oberlin and the daring of Alpine barons. The imperial road deserved and had the just admiration of



the great and the many. I exceedingly admired it also; but (peril and toil being in the ideal journey excluded) I would have preferred for myself, at least at times, the original path.

In this attempt to depict figuratively the style of Mr. Foster's preaching, my reference is not at all to his elaborately prepared sermons or lectures, but to those which had for me a still greater charm, in which he expatiated freely in every mode of thought and illustration, with little, if any, verbal pre-composition. None but those who have heard such unfettered and powerful excursions of his mind, can fully judge how far the figures may somewhat help to characterise them.

The mention of the imperial road has called to my recollection a saying of our friend, when once conversing with me about Coleridge and Hall. Some comparison being made, chiefly as to their conversational powers, he said, "Hall commands words like an emperor; Coleridge like a magician." That saying would, I think, be still correct, with his own name in place of the latter. The magic of Coleridge, whose extraordinary powers our friend fully recognised, was probably indeed more splendid and imposing than his own. It was much the habit of that man of genius, if I may judge by the report of others, to invest himself with brilliant clouds; passing sometimes the bounds of the intelligible for his hearers, if not for himself; and even occasionally (as some university professor said of him) "discoursing most eloquent nonsense;" which, amidst its obscurities, had a sort of magical prestige. If Foster could have so discoursed—which may be easily believed—it cannot be doubted that he *would* not; deterred at once by a sense of Christian duty, and by a manly unaffected taste. His genius restrained itself from wandering beyond the day-light of clear sense, amid the shining mists of what his

own phrase may designate, as "subtlety attenuated into inanity;"\* and this I imagine no wise companion would regret. But, as it was, we had sometimes magic enough from his lips,—if that may be termed intellectual magic, which summons, as from all points of the compass, the most sudden and happy combinations and illuminations of thought. Images arose on all sides at the master's bidding; nor did he hesitate to call them from the loftiest region or the lowest.

Though I do not distinctly remember to have heard him express that high admiration of the "Night Thoughts" which has been mentioned by my respected friend, Mr. Crisp,† it has always struck me, that had Mr. Foster's early taste led him to metrical composition, he would have produced poetry resembling that of Young, at once in its high range of solemn devotion, its poignant satire, and its multiform gathering and assemblage of unexpected images. That was in a measure true of himself, which I heard him say when highly extolling the imaginative powers of Bishop Taylor, "Jeremy took his figures from all quarters, alike from paradise and the kennel." Yet this should be guarded by remarking, that in the most familiar figures and phrases of our friend, as an author and preacher, there was nothing coarse or unseemly; which I would that we could predicate of all gifted speakers from pulpit or platform.

It may be instructive to notice, how differently Mr. Foster's public discourses were estimated, by different persons of the *unlettered* class. We say not the poor, for it is a question of stores or resources not in the purse but in the mind; and even our age finds, and will leave, some more "unlearned" among the rich, than some of the many

\* Essays, p. 41. Edit. xvii.

† In his Sermon, occasioned by the death of the Rev. John Foster.

who subsist by daily toil. But those even of the more illiterate, whose minds were awake, reflective or imaginative though with little or no culture, often heard him with delight; while others who (like some of their superiors in station) could receive quite contentedly "the thousandth common-place," or would judge the current stamp of gifts and orthodoxy missing, where the style quitted the long accustomed road of their former teachers,—were found in some instances to dislike, and almost to despise, his ministry.

Two aged women, of a village where he preached gratuitously, are said to have given those contrasted judgments of his sermons; the one setting him down for a "perfect fool," the other "longing to hear that good man all the winter:" useful hints to be revolved by public teachers. They show how very diversely, in all classes of society, individual minds are constituted; and while they should no doubt impress the duty and importance of aiming at a true simplicity, they will also bring us (if it were only from the uncertainty and contrariety of effects produced) to the great ultimate consideration, that the Supreme Instructor can alone make any words of man essentially beneficial.

The chief requisite, however, for well understanding and rightly valuing our revered friend's usual discourses, was not learning but thoughtfulness:—some capacity and habit in the hearers of thinking for themselves. He rarely, if ever, brought in (how much less affected) "sesquipedalian" words, "dark sayings," or "hard sentences," except by the necessity of the case. In writings for the press, he wholly discouraged "mock eloquence."\* Of this I can give an instance personal to myself, when having submitted a short paper to his criticism, I found the word "harmless" set

\* See the forcible remarks on this in his essay "On the Aversion of Men of Taste," &c.—*Essays*, Edit. xvii. p. 251.

over my own "innocuous," by the friendly pencil. This preference of "the plainest words that could fully express the sense," was both advocated and generally adhered to in his own works. He was sometimes severe, at least so it struck me once as the corrected party, against any sort of hyperbole in grave public addresses; for on hearing me make in a discourse an imaginative supposition (which I have still sometimes thought was not very indefensible), he took occasion to offer a most friendly stricture on what appeared, to his critical and accurate judgment, its "excess."

But, indeed, if our friend eschewed both pomp and obscurity in published compositions,—where time and helps may be had by most readers to "do" all "into English" for themselves, if they think the task will repay them,—how much more in preaching, where the hearers are "extempore" by necessity, whatever the speaker be. Nay, I venture to think he would have agreed with me, that there is no assembly, not excepting even the highest in our land, in which the needless use of exotic words and abstruse thoughts would not, to a great part at least of their members, render any address less effective. If this be true universally, who will question the more especial fitness of Dr. Campbell's rule as to preaching, "that whatever is advanced shall be within the reach of every class of hearers, in that which is of all audiences the most promiscuous?"\* For all ordinary occasions, doubtless that rule is excellent; yet it must be construed as intending the *generality* of every class: since to bring down all public religious instruction to the reach of the weakest individuals, would be to wrong and defraud the large majority.

I would add what I think our experience will frequently verify, that, even for cultivated persons, words of home growth have often a forcibleness in bringing thoughts and

\* Philosophy of Rhetoric, p. 105.

feelings into contact with the mind, which no other words possess. Hence I conceive that languages whose compound words are wholly constructed from their home resources, must be much the more clear and impressive to "promiscuous audiences:" thus, Greek to the Greeks, and German to the Germans. Sir James Mackintosh writes, "In all cases where we have preserved a whole family of words, the superior significancy of a Saxon over a Latin term is most remarkable. 'Well-being arises from well-doing,' is a Saxon phrase which may be thus rendered into the Latin part of the language,—'Felicity attends virtue:' but how inferior in force is the latter! In the Saxon phrase the parts or roots of words being significant in our language, and familiar to our eyes and ears, throw their whole meaning into the compounds and derivatives, while the Latin words of the same import, having their roots and elements in a foreign language, carry only a cold and conventional signification to an English ear."\* This well deserves practical attention. At the same time it is very evident, that a multitude of our words of foreign origin have no proper equivalents; and that, if a writer or speaker of English should try habitually to exclude them, it would be an impracticable endeavour to unmake the language. In the utterance also of what has not been pre-composed in writing, it will occasionally happen, although the wish and aim be to introduce as few difficult words as possible, that such first present themselves to the speaker's mind, and must be at once employed; because the plainer substitute—except recollection were far more prompt than usual—is not ready at our immediate need. If this sometimes happened in the discourses of Foster,—or when from their superior appositeness and nicety of adaptation, he was induced to choose uncommon words, or when the nature of his subject drew

\* History of England, vol. i. p. 82.

him into recondite thoughts,—he was at pains to throw light on each for the uninstructed class of hearers, by sub-joining some easier circuit of phrase for the one, and opening some simpler access to the other. It should also be observed, that, if there were passages in his sermons where the literary style prevailed, these were intermixed with others of a different cast, and with modes of expression and appeal the most plain, pointed, and colloquial. In all this I am persuaded he deserved sedulous imitation by Christian teachers.

The fault, in a critical point of view, of this eminent thinker's ordinary discourses (*if* that were a fault in his case, which in general one must account so), was their being sometimes, at least in the earlier periods of his ministry, not *symmetrical*, not carefully proportioned in their several parts. This remark, however, should be very much restricted to those earlier periods; or to his addresses on occasions and before audiences where he felt the greatest freedom. It does not apply to the lectures published since his decease; which, inasmuch as they evidently (from the unfinished hints introduced for oral enlargement) were not prepared for the press, surprise me by their accurate composition both as to plan and style. But, on occasions such as are now referred to, his mind, prolific of thoughts, endued with unceasing copiousness of associations, imaginative, historic, moral, spiritual, with every subject and object, sometimes lingered on indirect or preliminary views, stealing from itself the time for full and intimate discussion of the chief and direct matter. Yet I doubt whether any unprejudiced hearer can have wished this habit or license restrained by the excursive speaker, while it continually opened his way to trains of thought the most solemn, important, and exalted.

Even those who (I fear with some prejudice and captiousness) offered strictures on our eloquent friend's departures

from more ordinary methods, yet carried home, it may be judged, a stronger impression than they might have done from many a discourse framed more carefully by rules of proportion and completeness. I have heard of a country hearer's relating with something like critical scorn, how Mr. Foster began his sermon by telling the village congregation of his having waited in a shower (while on his way to preach to them) beneath a great oak tree; and of what thoughts had then occupied him as to the things which had heretofore taken place there,—changes in the world while that tree had been growing,—idol worship which might have been performed under a yet more ancient tree near the same spot but since fallen, of which that was then perhaps an acorn,—strokes of death on young and old, on the lords of the soil and the tillers of it, since that tree budded as a sapling,—all or most of which things, the rural critic averred were as well known to the hearers as to the speaker. But the critic's hearer answered, "Even this introductory part of the sermon, which you set light by, seems nevertheless to have fixed your attention very deeply, since you report it so fully."

I revert from these observations, which have been chiefly on our friend's public discourses, to some further slight notices of his private intercourse. Let me first venture to refer to one or two tendencies in his conversational habits, which, as I have sometimes felt in his society, there might be occasion to regret; deeming it right to mention these, in order that my sketches, though so exceedingly imperfect, may not be consciously unfaithful. Some thoughtful Christians, who had the privilege of occasionally associating with Mr. Foster, did regret that he passed not more habitually and extensively from the sphere of things secular into that of things ultra-mundane and unseen, where he could at once please, surprise, and edify us, by lifting each hearer,

boldly and felicitously, above his own unaided reach of thought. When he did so ascend, this was the sure result. We are certain also, that from his unfeigned devotement to the cause and hopes of religion, and his lofty, solemn views of the Deity, the universe, and all spiritual existence, such topics must have been highly congenial to his mind. I doubt not that both myself and others, who have regretted that they did not occupy a more large and constant share of our intercourse, were each in part responsible for not having elicited as fully as we might and ought to have done, the sacred eloquence of one from whom we should have derived so much to exalt and animate the Christian spirit.

In seeking to account for the habits and tendencies of such a man, one feels that the originality and depth of his character (and, I may add, his reserve on matters personal) must render the study very dubious, and the guesses probably often wrong. Here, accordingly, would have been the special occasion for that auto-biography ("a man's writing memoirs of himself"), which is, as we before remarked, the only profound and sufficient biography in any case; though even there the depth and sufficiency can be expected only from a truly introspective as well as Christian mind. The nearest approach to this, supposing intimate connexions and domestic friends to be any way adequately qualified, would be made by them, and by them only. Letters, however, are often of the very nature of auto-biography; as will be doubtless found in many passages of the preceding correspondence.

But to search into our friend's internal self, and the actings of his intellect and will, was like an attempt (so at least *I* felt) to explore a cave full of recesses, which you could not enter. A rapid sparkling stream, not without "gold dust,"\* flowed from it; but its windings and the

\* A figure used in his lectures.



well-head were far out of ken. His real habits of thought, feeling, and action, remained in some points more than usually hidden, and occasionally enigmatic, even to those who studied him most. And the more, on account of a certain reserve, excellent in its motives and spirit, already glanced at, and to which I shall advert again. My own idea, however, of the chief key to some of his characteristics, is this: Mr. Foster had a keen, deep feeling, at once mournful and indignant, of "the evil that is in the world;" especially in its varied forms of base selfishness—fraud, injustice, oppression;—and above all, of the aggravation which these sins must have, from the greater gifts and trusts of the delinquents, when practised by the prosperous, instructed, and ruling classes. He had a strong and earnest conviction, that these evils ought to be boldly and persistently exposed, denounced, and warred against. There were also probably, combining with this, the lessons of his own experience, how soon and often high theological questions, and moral or philosophical speculations closely connected with these, lead into thickets where we gather no fruits, but rather wound and entangle each other and ourselves with the brambles of those cold and twilight wildernesses.

He disliked, moreover, as I conjecture, both the seeming affectation or prejudicial narrowness of dwelling mainly on simple and experimental religious topics, and the apparent pride of always mounting to the ideal and remote. But still more than this I think it was the prevalent bias of his mind, to reckon on the greater likelihood of effecting good in conversation by what came home to men's daily life and business, and by discussing the great social interests of mankind. Thus he felt it a duty to return to the view of "our bad world," as he sometimes called it, and oftenest, perhaps to matters of a civil or ecclesiastical, or national and international character. To protest against great evils

in high places, to expose political abuses and oppressions, to censure the vices of men of the world, or the inconsistencies of professed Christians, he accounted the most probable means of really influencing the state of society, and, while courageously bearing a part in the contest against palpable ills, ultimately promoting good of the very highest kind. Doubtless his writings, particularly the "Essay on Popular Ignorance,"—which Macintosh is said to have pronounced one of the most able and original works of the age,—must have had great silent influence towards the political and educational changes that have marked our times. But I am of opinion, that in conversation, where all is usually less measured, and in some parts of his epistolary correspondence, if our distinguished friend had expatiated more on themes above the range of party feeling,—and less on topics where he was prompted to judgments and invectives not worthy of mental and moral greatness,—there might have been, in each of these departments, more contribution to his grand object—that of opposing evil and advancing good. His mind, so commanding, so full of resource, so essentially benevolent, might thus, it appears to me, without compromise of conscientious opinions, have enlarged its scope and opportunity of social usefulness. At the same time I utterly reject all such explanations of his conduct in these points, as party spirit and detraction would gladly devise, and vulgar or malignant minds might readily adopt.

Mr. Foster's deep aversion to whatever was meanly or unfeelingly selfish, sometimes prompted him to express his scorn or condemnation by keen satire or by stern reproof. In a letter to me, he thus forcibly describes the lot of a worthy dependant under a narrow-minded and exacting employer: "I saw him sinking almost to the dust, in the hard service of that most mean and

selfish mortal, the late —. He was longing to escape from a slavery poorly paid, and under which his health was evidently perishing. The good man has escaped from all the long grievances of a very suffering life, and I have suffered no loss by the attempt to save him."

One sort of instance which specially awakened in him such feelings, was that sophistry of low ambition which induced dereliction of principles for advancement's sake, by men of genius and talent. Contempt of this appeared to impel him the farther and more decidedly in an opposite direction.

Perhaps also his mental constitution fitted him rather for the office of a censor, than for milder habits of intercourse with those from whom he strongly differed. He felt, I doubt not, that "the fear of man" (to which he was as superior as most) still "bringeth a snare;" and his spirit resembled that of ancient prophets in an unshrinking maintenance of what he held to be truth.

Not that our friend could be harsh or uncourteous to those whom he deemed really good men; though he might be at first somewhat slow to believe them such, when their party and opinions were very unlike his own. But, once persuaded of this, he became affable, candid, and considerate of their position: and the tribute of his esteem must in some cases have been felt to be the more unquestionable and valuable, because whenever it was given to persons in high office or station, or to possessors of wealth, it was certainly not for, but notwithstanding, these circumstances; which had in his mind, no conciliating influence.

That may be truly said of Mr. Foster generally, which I have instanced in his deportment to my beloved mother; no man of equal powers was perhaps ever found so free from pride, assumption, or impatience, towards those

whom he judged sincere Christians ; so much a pattern of leniency, gentleness, and cordiality, towards the "least," when he thought them governed by right and pious principles. He was never harsh or distantial to the weak and poor. And when towards others he used sarcasm, it was distinctly for the cause of religion, justice, wisdom, and benevolence, however he might occasionally mistake in estimating what he deemed adverse to these.

A small but characteristic practical specimen of his satiric and humane feelings in conjunction, occurred, when, nearly forty years ago, I passed a summer evening with him at the house of one of my relatives. Some youths were fishing with a net in a stream not far off, and it was proposed that we should look at their "sport." A few little fishes were caught, and thrown upon the grass ; when Mr. Foster, without a word, quickly took up each and threw all again into the stream ; leaving us to construe the deed as best we might. Doubtless he was resolved to prolong the life and enjoyment which what is called sport had been abridging, while he shrewdly marked, by sport inverted, his estimate of that which commonly bears the name ; "sport to the strong" (as it was long since said), "but death to the feeble." And truly, notwithstanding the grave patronage for that particular sport, and the animating excitement of some others, it would seem passing strange, were it not for confirmed habit, to hear of a tribe of rationals, one favourite class of whose *amusements* consisted in skilfully destroying life.

Yet there are far greater cruelties than those of rural sports, in the vastly extended and perpetual mal-treatment both of "creatures dying for the service of man," and of "those that serve him by their life." Against these our eloquent friend has publicly and indignantly protested. "An inconceivable daily amount of suffering,

inflicted on unknown thousands of creatures, dying in slow anguish, when their death might be without pain as being instantaneous, is accounted no deformity in our social system, no incongruity with the national profession of a religion of which the essence is charity and mercy.”\*

Mr. Foster was signally distinguished by that rare negative quality, the absence of “egoism.” Never was this spirit discovered in him in those potent and substantial forms of selfishness or self-seeking which the French word here borrowed includes. But very observable also was the exclusion of that slighter and more petty form of it (too common with those who have won a share of public esteem), which we English term egotism. Before being conversant with the human mind at large, and with the defects of Christians, such a foible could not be expected to prevail in any discerning and instructed persons. It must be daily checked in our age of extended mental culture, when some facility in public speaking, and some attainments in literature or science, are become so altogether common, and when the production of respectable prose or verse in types forms hardly a greater distinction than in the days of our remote forefathers a fair handwriting and fixed orthography were. When we have learned something of the distance and multitude of worlds, and have also in our hands dictionaries of the great number of the literate in our small world, and catalogues of their countless works, self-conceit increasingly betrays littleness and folly.

How much more then should it be repressed by our belief in the existence of “angels” and “spirits” exalted far above us, and of that infinite Intelligence who “made the stars,” and “meted out the heavens.”

\* “Essay on Popular Ignorance.” Edit. ii. p. 147.

In real Christians, therefore, egotism might be supposed (before experience) to be quite precluded by the continual sense of its vast inconsistency. But experience teaches us that "old Adam" is, if one may so express it, at once too strong and too weak for such thoughts of wisdom and right-mindedness fully to prevail. The fault still too much inheres in man's contracted and self-idolizing mind, even when intellectually and morally enlarged by being spiritually renewed. One has heard and read of literary and scientific "men of the world," whose egotism was even ludicrously conspicuous; and I have known one or two Christians, eminent in their religious and lettered circles, in whom this weakness was too much uncorrected. It is fostered, as life advances, by the curiosity of others as to persons that have attained a certain note, whose questions often draw them into it unawares. Yet in "the highest style of man" this habit will doubtless be carefully controlled. Our friend afforded a remarkable instance of the complete avoidance or suppression of it. Like that Newton of whose surpassing powers he has expressed such unqualified admiration,\* he betrayed no self-importance. Of himself, his sayings, his writings, his doings, he never willingly talked; and it might be partly from a keen perception of the littleness of egotism in a sage, and its unseemliness in a believer, that he approached the contrary extreme, and so sparingly disclosed his personal feelings.

A well-known habit of Mr. Foster's conversation was that which is often suggested as profitable, especially in youth—the asking of one's companions respectively such information as each is best prepared to furnish; with the threefold aim of gaining knowledge, of enabling others to

\* *Essays*, Edit. xvii. p. 216.

impart it, and of giving them the pleasant impression that their company and information have some value.

This practice was carried into his later life. The thirst for knowledge, both of men and things, with the temper of courtesy and the absence of vanity, combined in his case to prompt and to prolong it. Thus he rather drew forth conversation than dictated or ruled it; having, indeed, a general readiness for any sort of blameless topic, from the most profound to the most familiar. A farm servant or a lover of old folios, a soldier or a weaver, a missionary or a miner, found him alike inclined (as I recollect by sundry instances) to elicit and welcome what each best could tell.

He had also the rare excellence of being a patient hearer; never showing eagerness to engross attention himself, never anticipating or interrupting others, except sometimes to aid them. Few, I should think, whose talents (and it may be added whose satiric and disputative powers) were so felt and recognized, can have caused so little of fear or constraint, even in the young and diffident, when they were well disposed. The profane and irreligious might, indeed, with great reason dread his rebuke; nor were the vain and frivolous secure. I have seen a young man in his company, acute and informed, but piquing himself on the "exquisite" in dress, who seemed instinctively ill at ease lest a shaft should fly, which silk and velvet were not proof against. A pedant or boaster might have fared worse, and some ladies might be scared by the severe student who had talked of "ambulating blocks for millinery." But wherever he saw simplicity, sincerity and modesty, his evident and successful aim was to inspire confidence and ease. Christian principle, no doubt, prompted this; in other words, true self-knowledge, which is in effect humility.

It was in the smallest companies that our friend was most social and complacent. He had no turn for discoursing to a

whole circle, like those talkers who (as has been said of De Stael) are "admirable in monologue." His true conversational element and place was the fireside of a very few friends, agreeing in the main with himself, from whom, however, he claimed no deference, but with whom he felt a cordial freedom. That the reception of some visitors was quite unwelcome to him; as a heavy tax on time, might be presumed, and is pretty strongly stated in a letter to myself, mentioning residence in a city as "a thing to the last degree undesirable. *There,*" he continues, "besides many other things to be deprecated, the soothsayers predicted there would be one other 'plague.' There is an aggravation of this direful pest in —, from its being a place very much frequented by people from a distance, who, 'as they happened to *be* there, would do themselves the pleasure of calling on you,' as Mr. Jay used to complain at Bath. These polite personages would have thought it wrong—oh, very wrong indeed!—to come to your house to steal a silver spoon, or the like, but thought themselves [conferring a favour by calling on you to rob you of hours of your valuable time; time in which you were, perhaps, severely pressed to accomplish some mental task incumbent on you."

Indeed, nothing has been more fully announced by him than the high value which he attached to every "talent," and to time especially as the grand requisite and substratum for using and improving the rest. Of a sermon from him (1805) on Psalm xc. 12, I find the following note: "Those people who are not in the habit of estimating a day as a serious portion of time, or feeling regret at having trifled it away, but who lose it with apparent unconcern, will generally be found to be trifling life away on the whole account, and adding day to day without improvement." Yet, at least in reference to the conduct and plan of others, he did not urge, as to the distribution and expenditure of time, an



unqualified strictness. In a letter of 1812 he writes:—"All this apology would itself just as much *want* an apology, if it should seem to you (which I earnestly hope it will not) to carry an appearance as if my time were put under some extraordinary rigorous discipline, and occupied with employments of which an interesting discussion with a friend would be an unwelcome interruption. Nothing can be further from the truth than this."

A letter of 1820 contains the following passage:—"In favour of a mind too prone to melancholy musings, and a kind of pensive subsidence, I have no doubt that the most rigid morality and religion will give a full sanction to many liberties and expedients for exhilaration, especially excursions in quest of the interest and instruction afforded by seeing the diversities of nature and man."

Mr. Foster was a genuine lover of "natural scenery," and his admiration dwelt much on its separate features, even more perhaps than on the varied whole and its combined effect. I have known him linger by a huge ancient tree in the park of Longleat, still reluctant to quit the spot, and as if half ready to take root near its giant trunk. A much valued friend, a lady with whom he visited many beautiful spots in our neighbourhood, speaks of the difficulty with which he was persuaded to quit the top of "Alfred's Tower," at Stourhead, where the panoramic prospect riveted him. In the same mood he would gaze untiringly on a waterfall, or the rushing of a rapid stream. The habits of his mind exemplified the statement of Coleridge concerning "the great book of nature," that "it has been the music of gentle and pious minds in all ages; it is the *poetry* of all human nature, to read it in a figurative sense, and to find therein correspondencies and symbols of the spiritual world." \*

\* The Statesman's Manual, Appendix B., p. 267, second edition,

Eminently was he one of those whom he has himself described as finding "the wide field of nature a scene marked all over with mystical figures, the prints and traces, as it were, of the frequentation and agency of superior spirits. They find it sometimes concentrating their faculties to curious and minute inspection, sometimes dilating them to the expansion of vast and magnificent forms; sometimes beguiling them out of all precise recognition of material realities, whether small or great, into visionary musings; and habitually and in all ways conveying into the mind trains and masses of ideas of an order not to be acquired in the schools, and exerting a modifying and assimilating influence on the whole mental economy."\*

This subject, though it to seem have no immediate relation to that of our friend's devotional exercises, will appositely lead us to it; for I have been told by valued relatives who, soon after a tour in North Wales, happened to come into his company, that having asked them many questions about the chief mountains and romantic views, he afterwards, in the social prayer of the evening, made striking reference to the wisdom and goodness of God in providing at once for our instruction and enjoyment in those grand and beautiful scenes of which they had conversed.

His domestic and public prayers (more especially perhaps the former) are well known to have been very peculiar. They were in some sort *meditative*, but should rather be designated as markedly *specific*; dwelling and dilating on one or a very few points, instead of touching more cursorily on many. No doubt the attention of the thoughtful who joined in them was more sure to be fixed; but the less intelligent had, I apprehend, some difficulty in *fully* joining

reprinted with his *Essay on the Constitution of the Church and the State*, 1839.

\* Vide *Eclectic Review*, May, 1814, p. 462; or "Contributions," &c. Vol. II. p. 436.

with the eminently thoughtful speaker. This was probably greater, for the same hearer, in attending to his prayers than to his discourses; because elucidations or illustrations of thought could not in the former be added.

In this respect it appears to me that our friend's prayers were not the best adapted for "the many:" but for persons at all akin by thoughtfulness to himself, they were most impressive by calm solemnity and by true sublimity. They did not betoken overflowing or quickly excitable emotions; but they did indicate such as were earnest and profound, tempered in the moulds of unborrowed thought; a cast of feeling often more fixed and practical than that which springs from impulses more sudden and more ardent.

Of these remarks, already perhaps too extended, it may be said by some,—the nonconformists having few men of note among them, are prone, when such arise, to magnify the individual's talents and doings, with a favouritism which betrays either want of knowledge or willing forgetfulness as to the many distinguished names in larger and more learned communions, where the frequency of great endowments abates the fame of each, and precludes the conspicuousness of almost all.

Without pleading guilty to such a charge, we may yet admit that there is some risk of an over-estimation of what is rare, and of a certain magniloquence about it: some added danger of "glorying in men," where, as to genius and acquirements, there are comparatively few in whom to glory. It concerns us all, of whatever community, to bear in mind that ancient expostulation, "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

The religious body to which Mr. Foster belonged is, in the old world, one of the less numerous, and not one of the most lettered. It was formerly remarked to me, by an able minister of a larger denomination, "Among you Baptists

extremes prevail—one or two mountains, and a good many mole-hills :”—his reference being obviously to Hall and Foster. No wonder, then, if we should make much of our rare mountains, and confining our view for the time to that district in which we stand, should be apt to think them unrivalled.

I hope, however, that nothing has really been here offered in the spirit of exaggeration or boasting. A very different lesson is assuredly impressed on us by meditating on the successive departure of those who have been lights in the world, and by witnessing the bodily infirmities which at length, in the order of God's providence, weigh down the greatest minds. We feel how all distinctions fade into comparative unimportance, and almost vanish out of thought, before the great fact of death, and the vast unveiling of futurity. With a life which is “even a vapour,” and—if aught in the universe be real—with a boundless reality so near, what do all advantages or elevations in the one amount to, except as affecting the other? The grave of our distinguished friend, or the chair and couch of his last debility and pain, are, for each of us, “posts” of solemn “observation,” at which all earthly attainments and successes appear, except in their reference to what shall be everlasting, alike in littleness; and all the varied events of time resemble the brief differences of bygone dreams, the untoward, or painful, or attractive.

When we observe, and perhaps have felt, the eagerness and zeal with which so many covet and besiege the honours, prizes, and “great things” of this world, one might almost think it was expected, as one of the victories of modern science, to live here always; or at least to have the longevity of patriarchs renewed; while yet disease and death, so continual and imminent about our path, evermore rebuke the illusion.

Mr. Foster had very long suffered from a chronic disorder of the bronchial glands, which indeed had obliged him, thirty-seven years before, to relinquish, amidst the regrets of his friends and hearers, the pastoral office at Frome, though it was afterwards for a time resumed elsewhere. Even in the prime of life he often endured much pain and local harm, in the discourses and prolonged conversations which edified and delighted many. But in latter years he had been forbidden, on account of much more threatening symptoms, to speak at all in public. He submitted to this affliction, and the consequent disability for one chief kind of endeavour to be useful, I have reason to believe, with uncomplaining patience. When, about five weeks before his removal from the world, I visited our suffering friend for the last time, I had been apprised of an increase of illness, and difficulty of conversing, which would limit me to a short interview; yet had no apprehension, even after observing his changed appearance, that his spirit would so soon be summoned to its better home. He came down from his chamber to see me in the customary sitting room, and although his thin and pale looks indicated great debility, conversed in his usual manner. I think I noticed to him the blessing of having the intellectual powers so entirely unimpaired during illness; to which he answered, "It is a comfort even to understand what is read and heard."

I then referred to the melancholy mental decay of the late distinguished Southey; on which Mr. Foster remarked, "No doubt his mind was worn out by the toil of building up many books; as if there were a want, a *famine* of books." "So it is" (he added with a smile), "there are men who even apologize for their errors and haste, and for not delaying in order to greater correctness, as if the world were labouring under a dearth of the article." I replied, "Consider, dear sir, you are speaking to one of the

culprits;" to which he rejoined, "No, hardly that, yet." I said to his daughter, who sat by, "We all wish Mr. Foster had been *more* a culprit." He then intimated, "Perhaps we may wish this at times, now that nothing more can be done;" adding, "Much has been omitted every way, partly from trifling. One feels that in the great concern of religion, much more might have been done." I observed, "All, however, no doubt, is for the best." To which our friend replied, "Yes, in the deep sense. These feelings of defect serve to humble us, and to show that in ourselves we are nothing." I said, "It is happy, sir, that you have good daughters near you. Even a son would not be able to afford such aid and solace." He answered, "Yes, indeed, they are very kind." The following sentiment was also uttered by him with peculiar seriousness: "How dreary would old age and illness be without the great doctrine of the Atonement!" I left him, bearing with me a deep impression of that thought; but certainly not with the apprehension that in this world we should meet no more. It was however so appointed. He and many more whom we revered and loved are gone; and though some remain whom we dearly prize, what would life itself be without hope in the "glorious gospel," but an apparition, and departure, and oblivion of shadows?

With what a tone of utterly cold and thoughtless unconcern do we sometimes hear the fact mentioned, even by professed Christians,—“he *died*.” “he is *dead*.” Nay, in how cursory and unthinking a manner have we frequently named it ourselves! And yet the feeling of awful strangeness, of momentous novelty, which at times pervades us, when for an instant, we have had, as it were, realising flashes of that event as indeed at hand, is one which all earthly symbols of thought, spoken or written, are powerless to arrest, and image, and disclose. The

silent, lonely transit of a conscious and reflective spirit—a being which is profoundly accountable to its Divine Author—from all connexion with this bodily life, and with this visible world, into a new mode of existence, unknown and unconceived and illimitable, must ever be the most mysterious and awfully deciding change on which our meditation can be fixed: and the solemnity of it is inevitably and justly heightened, in proportion to the greatness of the individual spirit's capacities and consequent responsibilities.

How painful therefore the thought, that so many of the most powerful and expanded minds have, to all appearance, left this earthly state, without seeking a right and availing preparedness for the vast hereafter, by faith in the One Sacrifice, and renovation from the Infinite Spirit. Remembering these with sadness and awe, we turn for a relieving contrast to the contemplation of those instances (with the hope that they may soon be far more multiplied) where the special and abounding grace of God has consecrated to his own service his highest intellectual gifts. As we meditate on these—and indeed on all the servants of God who have entered his rest, or will follow thither—the event, still so painful and awful in itself, is viewed rather in its peaceful and felicitous result; justifying a forcible and singular expression which I remember our friend once used to me. He had been referring to some gloomy facts and thoughts which cloud and darken the whole horizon of life; but then added—"there is however one luminary—it is the visage of Death." When we think how often, in our own age, genius has lamentably misused its treasures, by such productions and social communications as are remembered in life's last days with inexpressible sorrow,—it is indeed matter for high and solemn thankfulness, to review such a course as that of our departed friend; a course of resolved

piety and genuine benevolence; a dedication from early life to the advancement of the religion of Christ: to dwell on his memory as a devoted servant and worshipper of that supreme Lord who has called him from us; one who deeply adored the Infinite Benefactor as revealed through his beloved Son, and really "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Few spirits can have passed away from earth, endowed with more of intellectual grasp and penetration to meet the wonders and grandeurs of regions immense and untraversed:—few also I believe with a more profound persuasion, that as creatures, however endowed, admired, or dignified, "in ourselves we are nothing," but yet that, if true supplicants and recipients of the Divine grace, then, "life and death, things present, things to come, are ours:" since "we are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

You will deeply feel with me, dear sir; how earnest should be our wish and prayer, that many more of those whose powers and acquirements might render them, in the happiest sense, "lights burning and conspicuous,"\* may attain the same faith and devotion, the same humility and hope, instead of forgetting God, while idolizing the world and themselves.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

J. S.

\* John v. 35. Compare Phil. ii. 15



**NINE LETTERS**

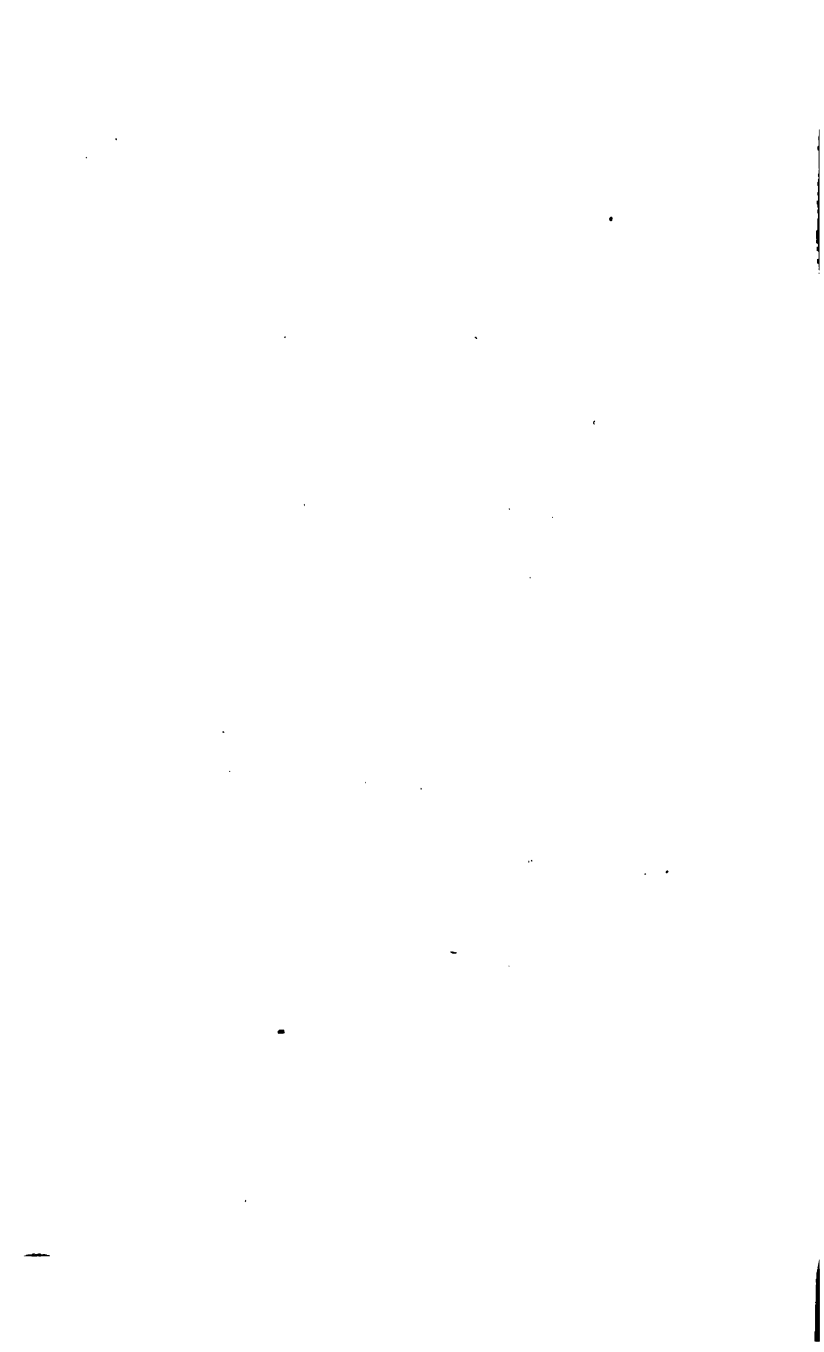
**ADDRESSED TO MISS SARAH SAUNDERS,**

**DURING HER LAST ILLNESS;**

**PRECEDED BY A BRIEF MEMOIR:**

**BY**

**JOHN FOSTER.**



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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SARAH SAUNDERS (to whom the nine following letters were addressed) was the eldest daughter of John Saunders, Esq., solicitor, of Plymouth. The opening mind of this singularly-gifted child was distinguished by strong reasoning powers, general intellectual pre-eminence, and a prodigious memory; together with the habit of exercising, from earliest life, an independent judgment on whatever subject happened to engage her attention. These striking qualities early attracted the notice of Mr. Foster (for at the age of four she removed to Bristol); and as he often saw and traced the rapid development of her faculties, so, he was delighted, in his condescension, occasionally, as time advanced, to engage with her in some argument. On these occasions she maintained her opinions, although with deference, with great animation, and in the most appropriate language; acknowledging an error alone when her understanding was satisfied. Mr. Foster once declared, that he had never met with any young person, male or female, comparable to Sarah Saunders, for ingenious, varied, and even felicitous conversation.

The character of her mind may be estimated by one or two anecdotes, out of numerous others. However trifling in themselves, they derive a reflected value from the subsequent letters, and which letters will be the better understood by these slight preliminary remarks.

Before the age of four years, having failed in some small duty, her mother remarked to her, "Sarah, do you not know that it is said in scripture, 'Children, obey your parents?'" "Yes," she replied, "and directly after it takes the part of the poor children, and says, 'Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.'"

At the age of five (during a brief residence at Plymouth), a friend lent her Pope's *Homer*, which she devoured, and became a decided *Grecian*. Soon after its perusal, a lady, with feathers, came into her mother's drawing-room, and approached to kiss the infant in the mother's arms; when the child turned away, scared with the nodding plumes; on which the lady, perceiving the cause of the alarm, placed her bonnet on the table, and then came and saluted the child. Little Sarah Saunders marked the incident, and then enthusiastically repeated:—

“The glittering terrors from his brow unbound,  
And placed the beaming helmet on the ground.”

At an age when most others would be considered as in a state of infancy, Mr. Montgomery's “*World before the Flood*,” just then published, was lent to her; into which she at once eagerly plunged, and, to the great credit of the poet, read the whole of it *at a sitting*. Being asked, which of the characters she most admired, she at once answered, “*Satan!*” and for which preference she was prepared to assign her infantine reasons!

Being introduced to Hannah More, young as she was, Mrs. More said, knowing her taste for reading, “My dear little girl, what was the last book you read?” To which Sarah Saunders, with great simplicity, replied, “A cookery book, ma'am.” “Oh, that's right;” smiling, answered the experienced lady, “The child, thirsting for knowledge, reads indiscriminately. It is for maturity to select.”

But now, to pass over much that might be said, to more important considerations. When the complaint, of which Sarah Saunders died at the age of eighteen (consumption), was beginning to assume a fatal aspect, a relative suggested to Mr. Foster,—who was regarded by the sufferer with the highest veneration,—that a few lines from him in her circumstances, might be acceptable and useful. To this he readily assented; and as his first letter was well received, and beneficial in its effects, and the disease was rapidly advancing, his sympathy became more excited, and, in extending his communications, each successive letter increased in faithfulness and intensity of feeling.

The end of Sarah Saunders was now manifestly approach-

ing, so that Mr. Foster was doubtful whether it would be proper to have the last and ninth letter presented to her, and therefore sent it under cover to her uncle, Mr. Joseph Cottle of Bristol, with the following note.

*"Stapleton, Feb. 7, 1825.*

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have again endeavoured to assemble a few ideas, in aid of the serious reflections and consolatory anticipations of our dear young friend. You will give the letter at whatever time you think proper.

"I am, my dear Sir, yours most truly,

"JOHN FOSTER."

J. C.

## MEMOIR.

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SARAH SAUNDERS, who died in February, 1825, in her nineteenth year, after an illness of six months, was strikingly distinguished, throughout her short life, by the qualities of her character. In very early childhood she displayed a force and extent of intellect which placed her quite out of the class to which by her age she belonged. She had, indeed, the vivacity and activity of that age; but over these, and in them, there predominated an energy of mind. She would surprise her relatives and friends with conceptions and inquiries, so far beyond the ordinary reach of childish thought as to draw on her a sudden examining look, as it were, to see that the utterer of them really *was* a child. She would listen with the utmost attention to conversations on subjects the most foreign to childish interests. It is, for instance, remembered that once, at the age of seven, she was extremely indignant at being removed, at her usual evening hour of going to rest, from listening to an old gentleman, a noted political partizan, talking in a spirited manner on the national affairs of France. She said she should have been delighted to hear him a great deal longer, adding, "And I thought as he did." She would sometimes read uninterruptedly for many hours, with an attention not to be diverted by surrounding objects and movements.

Corresponding to this prematurity of intelligence was her facility, in that earliest, and in the more advanced stages of her life, of acquiring, and with a peculiar comprehension and accuracy, every kind of knowledge included in the regular course of education. And that was perhaps but the minor part of the knowledge which she was continually acquiring, since her mind was carried with great inquisitiveness and interest far out of the routine of mere school occupation, to become conversant with various subjects,

and especially with the history of great events and eminent characters.

From earliest childhood she had much less than the usual measure of easy, undistinguishing, and implicit *assent*. It was always necessary for her to feel that she *understood* what she was to admit; her penetration instantly perceiving what was vague or equivocal in the things asserted or inculcated. And when the representation was clearly intelligible, she would require the proof of its truth or reasonableness, and would fix on any defect of that proof with intellectual quickness and persisting objection. She was not to be satisfied or beguiled by evasion, or general and unmeaning language, nor made to acquiesce in the dictates of mere authority. This character of mind rendered the instructor's office difficult, and sometimes very perplexing, as a counterbalance to the singular pleasure of having the charge of so intelligent a spirit.

In forming opinions, even in that early period, she had remarkable independence of thought and positiveness of conviction. And this determined character of intellect was combined with a kindred moral temperament. As decided in her *will* as in her judgment, she would resolutely adhere to her purposes or to her avowed preferences, in spite of her purposes being overruled. This was in her a quality of far higher order than mere obstinacy of temper, inasmuch as the determination of her will involved a vigorous exercise of thought, through which it took the shape of at least plausible reason and argument. The inflexibility thus created could not, however, but sometimes cause considerable embarrassment to her elder relatives, to whom it belonged to direct and control her. She had a habitually predominant rectitude of intention, to prevent her acting wilfully wrong; but then she would be herself the judge of what was right. So that when she practically submitted, in compliance with their will, it would be done in the manner of one who concedes a point, in deference to established regulations, and not as admitting the justice of the requirement in itself.

To complete this strength of character, she possessed an extraordinary courage. It seemed as if she were constituted to be dismayed by nothing. There was thus a principle of congeniality in the warm admiration which she

always felt for the energetic and heroic class of characters, as exhibited in history or fiction. And there can be no doubt that, on the supposition of her having attained the maturity of life, and being then led into a train of extraordinary difficulties, or thrown into scenes of peril and disaster, she would have evinced a spirit equal to every situation, and have acted with distinguished fortitude, consistency, and perseverance.

If the description of such a confirmation of qualities, carried forward through the progress of youth, should be understood to imply an unattractive and repellent character, it would be a very great mistake. She laid a strong and tenacious hold on the regard of all within the circle of her connections and acquaintance.

In childhood, as has been already said, she had much of the grace and sprightliness appropriate to that morning of life; while the animation was the more captivating for the mental vividness which shone in it. She had always an inviolable regard to truth, so that the most implicit reliance could be placed on every thing she declared or promised. And in action she had a strong sense of the obligation of rendering justice, while she claimed it. She was grateful to those from whom she experienced kindness, affectionate to those whom she esteemed, and capable of being deeply and ardently so to those whom she should esteem in the highest degree. As she approached maturity, her improving reason, her extremely nice and accurate perception, and her conscience of duty, regulated and attempered the force of her character. Her freedom of opinion, and the assurance which she necessarily possessed from superior intelligence and knowledge, were accompanied with an unobtrusive modesty; and she had no assumption in social intercourse but that which was inseparable from conscious ability. She was a most attentive listener to the sentiments of others, with a constant desire to gain improvement. At the same time, she was vigilantly observant of their characters, of which her estimates were formed with decision, but generally with discrimination and equity, and a considerate attention to propriety as to where and in what terms she pronounced them. She was the most liable to be swayed from impartiality in favour of superior talent.



In one sense of the word *simplicity*, she possessed that quality in perfection; that is to say, an entire freedom from all little artifice, disingenuousness, dissimulation, affectation, and devices of display. She had too much sincerity and honest directness of principle, too little vanity, and too settled an internal confidence, to admit their being compatible with her nature. It was not, therefore, by any studied care that she avoided them; they were simply foreign to the constitution of her character. She was undesirous of attracting notice or admiration, appearing much more interested in the subject itself, than at any time called forth her mind in social converse, than about any consideration of the figure she should be deemed to make in discoursing on it. She often would evidently be occupied with the subject *alone*, while those in her company were occupied with the subject and *her*. It would often strike them how clear she was of all petty design and self-reference, in giving her mind to the social discussion, and conflict of sentiments. The pertinacity which she would sometimes manifest appeared to be not that of competition, but of sincere opinion, maintained not because she had asserted it, but because she could not see better reasons for surrendering it.

Simplicity in *another* sense, that of disclosing without reserve all that was within, could not, perhaps, belong to such a mind. She loved social converse, entered into it with great readiness and spirit, and was often, according to the common expression, the "life" of it; yet her friends, while they were always certain of the candid sincerity of whatever she *did* communicate, could perceive that the most lively and amicable freedom of intercourse still left something behind reserved from social commerce; that there was, as it were, a retired apartment in her mind, where she had thoughts and feelings of her own secluded from inspection. They would often wish they could have access to that reserved interior, and were led sometimes into an almost impatient exercise of imagination to conjecture what might be there existing or passing. It was not, however, from any principle of designing concealment, or self-protective caution, that her most intimate consciousness was thus silent and veiled; but from a natural insuperable

indisposition to make her own mind, and its own exclusive interests, a subject of communication; an indisposition probably confirmed by finding among the many co-evals with whom she was associated in education, but little of such congeniality as would have drawn her out by sympathy. For though mingling with them often in the enjoyment of a lively activity, with a rival juvenility of alert and excitable sprits, she still felt she was, as to her own peculiar internal self, alone. Thus at once she was practically, and to a considerable extent, cordially social, and yet mentally apart.

At the same time it appeared, as another characteristic feature, that this limited communicativeness did not cause her any pain or restlessness, any fretting, impatient emotions, that she could not be in more complete reciprocation. All that she felt exclusively belonging to her own spirit and its operations she could keep to herself, with a calm independence of social relation; and this without any thing of austerity, or alienation from society.

She did, however, in her long illness, regret one effect of this reserve and exclusiveness in her mental habitude—the extreme indisposition and difficulty which she felt to converse freely on the subject of religion, as relative to her own situation and prospects. This difficulty was not overcome till near the termination of her life.

After a representation of so much of the *strong* qualities in her character and habits, it is the more proper to mention, that she was the reverse of what is commonly meant by the epithet *masculine*, as applied in a disadvantageous sense to any of the female sex. Her manners, always simple and natural, were as refined and feminine as her slight and graceful form. A stranger, who should have happened to notice a girl of rather diminutive proportions, marked with every delicacy of person and deportment, and speaking (if he had heard her speak), in a voice singularly soft and sweet, might have been incredulous to the information, what intrepid firmness, decision of resolve, and intellectual force, had their dwelling in that form. Her countenance, beautiful in the usual sense of the word, possessed also something much beyond mere physical beauty,—a mental lustre, in the vivid and changing expression of intelligence and feeling.

Distinguished by such a combination of qualities—the description of which might appear to a person unacquainted with her of unquestionable consistency with one another and with her age, but it is true in every part—she grew up in constant and uncommonly vigorous health, into her eighteenth year, exciting in her family and friends the highest hopes, not unmingled with many solitudes. But those hopes and cares were destined by the Sovereign Disposer soon to cease. While on a visit to relatives in the immediate environs of London, she slept one night of a sultry summer with little covering, and without having observed (through the blind), that the window had been left open, in the direct current of an air charged with one of the penetrating noxious fogs incident to that vicinity. A consequent violent inflammation in the chest left, when it subsided, the most threatening symptoms of incipient consumption. After she was removed to her family in Bristol, these symptoms were too plainly progressive, in a slowly increasing debility; against which, however, the energy of her spirit strove to maintain much of her accustomed activity. And as she suffered little pain, she was not sensible, for a while, how fatally she was sinking; though it was signified to her pious relatives, by professional judgment, that the result was not dubious. The concern which those excellent relatives had always felt for her highest interests became too anxious to admit of delay in apprising her of her situation. As she had not in previous years betrayed any express aversion to religion; had never, as far as it is known, been sceptical of its truth; had always paid a respectful attention to its observances, and had read serious books, they were willing to hope that this had been among the subjects which she had silently resolved in her thoughts. But it was, at a late period of her illness, her penitential confession, that from this subject, as a vital personal concern, she had been unhappily estranged.

The information that the disease had the most decided indications of being mortal, was received by her in the first instance with incredulity; and she did not admit a full conviction till after some further progress of those ominous indications. Yet, before she had come to this entire conviction, she signified, even with emphasis, her gratitude to a

friend who had conveyed to her some religious thoughts and advices on the express assumption that, in all probability, she was near the end of life; showing, that she associated no ungracious feeling with the monitor who had spoken in terms of such presage. In yielding, by degrees, to the evidence that her case was so, she betrayed no weakness and but slight perturbation; uttered no complaints; manifested no eagerness for expedients, and change of expedients, for trial as remedies.

This composure, however, would appear to have been at first fully as much of the nature of a constitutional or philosophic firmness, as of Christian resignation. And it required some progress of time and reflection to bring her mind to the full, decided, habitual earnestness of preparing to appear before her Creator and Judge. The attainment of this state of mind was through degrees which her characteristic reserve rendered difficult to be distinctly perceived by the watchful solicitude of her relations. At some times this suppression of the signs of her deeper thoughts and emotions, together with occasional appearances of a somewhat greater interest than they could have wished her to feel in subjects of inferior importance, made them anxious for evidence that she was completely awake to the most momentous concern. They were not unapprehensive lest the fearless temperament which had always distinguished her, should here have the effect of rendering her too little sensible to even the solemn anticipations which ought irresistibly to agitate the conscience and the passions. But they did not wait and pray for the Divine influences in vain. The welcome proof was given them that she still more and more applied herself to serious and devotional employment; while every effort to assist her attainment of just views and consolatory hopes was received with gratitude. They had cause, besides, not to doubt that the reality exceeded what she was willing to show in appearance, or acknowledge in words, since she had always been remarkable for an aversion to forward professions, and every kind of ostentation; and for such an abhorrence of being estimated above the truth of her character, that she would, at any time in her preceding life, rather keep the best indications in shade than exhibit them. So far from being disposed to exhibit them

for the purpose of drawing applause, she would very reluctantly do so for self-justification.

It was a hard and protracted discipline through which she was appointed to pass. She felt with bitterness, sometimes approaching to anguish, how much there was in the temper of her spirit which required to be subdued and transformed to the evangelic character. She deplored that, in her very prayers for that state of mind which she saw to be indispensable, there mingled a pride, an impatience, a defect of submission and faith, which might justly render them unavailing. In a later hour she acknowledged, in recollection of the earlier stage, that the delay of the Divine gift of that happy change of feeling which she desired, and the difficulty of maintaining the strife against the opposite tendencies of her mind, had sometimes excited complaining emotions even against Heaven, which in reflection alarmed her, and produced a still deeper sense of internal evil.

The conviction of urgent necessity pressed upon her unremittingly; she felt there was absolutely one great object to be obtained. She had no temptation to subside into a confidence in the sufficiency of her uniformly virtuous conduct, and to disown the sovereign claims of God upon the heart. She felt that *there* was the essential state of the character as towards him. And she was a keen inspector and severe judge of the evil that was there. Even the pride which she had to deplore was not a pride of *merit*; but a certain peculiar spirit of independence and self-dominion, which was reluctant to sink and be prostrated in the humiliation of feeling herself destitute of power. Its severest mortification had been in the proof enforced on her by painful experience, that she was unable to subdue the inward perversity which she condemned, and to compel her mind into the state which she desired.

This mortification was a salutary part (and the long unconquered principle of a spirit which had never learnt to yield, required it to be a protracted part) of the discipline to bring her down to the complete surrender of every kind of self-sufficiency, and to a sole reliance on the Divine power and mercy, with a simplicity of trust in the merits of Christ. Her attainment of this state, happily attained at length, was gradual and slow; indeed the whole process was

painfully slow, both of her yielding to the subduing power of the Christian spirit, and of her admitting its consolations. And these consolations, when admitted, did not mitigate the severity of her self-reproach, for whatever she felt in her heart still unreduced and unconformed to the Christian principles and the Divine will. She expressed an apprehension lest the exclusive trust, for all here and hereafter, in the sufficiency of the Redeemer, should, in imparting an assurance of safety, be perverted to the effect of soothing her spiritual cares into a treacherous repose on *mere* safety, and diminishing her concern for the subduing of all sinful dispositions.

It was a merciful dispensation of Him who had appointed this long and hard process for her soul, that her disease, without ever being equivocal as to the fatal character of its symptoms, advanced, during several months, by very slow degrees, and that all the while she enjoyed the most quiet retirement, and the assiduous and affectionate attendance of a family most anxious to avert every disturbing influence, to alleviate every suffering, and to impart instruction and consolation at every opportune moment.

In the decline of her strength it was very natural she should be reluctant to sink into helplessness and complete dependence. And the insuppressible vigour of her mind maintained a surprising power of even bodily activity during the progressive debilitation of her frame. But she observed that progress, and would, from one week to another, and with a calmness increasing with the diminution of power, notice some particular action which she had been able to perform a little while since, but could now no longer. She had always been an animated admirer of the beauties of nature, and to even a far advanced period of her decline, she was gratified and exhilarated in being taken out on short excursions over the adjacent picturesque country. In the last instance of being borne towards the carriage, she suffered so distressing a seizure as to threaten almost instant dissolution in the attempt. And then she seemed to feel a mental pang, from this sudden evidence that she had looked on the face of nature for the last time. But it was a transient emotion. In her habitual feelings and meditations, she had already yielded herself up as belonging to death more than to life.

One day, having been at her particular desire left alone with the physician, she requested, in a tone that would not be denied, to be informed how long he should judge it probable she might live. Not without reluctance, and after deliberation, he named the term of six or seven weeks; but intimating also, that her situation was such that any day *might* be the last. Her friends found her perfectly composed, on returning to her after he was gone.

It should seem that, though it was religion that vanquished the fear of death, it was not the sole cause of the willingness which she avowed to part with life. The writer of this memorial of her, congratulating her on having gained a victory over that most natural affection, the love of life, was somewhat surprised to hear her reply, in her easy and unaffectedly decided manner of expression, that *that* was not so much of a conquest, for that she had never been strongly attached to life. It appeared that, in the bloom and animation of youth, with flattering worldly prospects before her, and while she was the object of the affection and admiration of her friends, she had never been sanguine and romantic as to the possible felicities of the human lot on earth. The tendency so natural to youth, to indulge a warm presumption of those possibilities, had in her been repressed, partly by a clear-sighted observation of the actual conditions of life; among which, she said, in answer to a question on the subject, she had never seen the example of one which she could have been willing to accept for her own.

When such an estimate, formed even in health, of the prospects of life in this world, was combined in far advanced sickness with the deliberate hope of a better, it was not wonderful to observe the unhesitating, the remarkably absolute though quiet manner, in which she spontaneously said she would not, supposing it were possible and could be offered to her, return to that life from which she was receding; the only regret which she expressed being, that hers should have been a life in which there had been so little service to God.

The acceleration of disease and debility, in the last few weeks, subjected her to severe suffering, from violent cough, laboriousness of breathing, the difficulty of speaking, and the restlessness of frequent feverish agitation, all pressing

on the feebleness of an exhausted frame, and causing also, what she painfully felt, an inability for any continued exercise of thought. And there were moments of insuppressible irritability, which was deplored with a bitterness of self-reproach which her friends regretted as excessive. There was no wane of the clearness and active power of her faculties. There was the same quick perception, acuteness of distinction, and versatility of observation, with occasional pleasing sparkles of vivacity, and with the most prompt excitability to intellectual discourse, in the intervals of somewhat remitted suffering; though this would be too often at the cost of aggravating the return of that suffering. The discriminative quality of her observations and questions required no small effort of mind on the part of those who had to reply.

Her kind and grateful affections, as occasions called them forth, seemed to become more warmly manifested. But what gratified her pious attendants the most was, that she was at length set much at liberty from that reserve which had so long obstructed their intimate knowledge of her religious feelings. She ingenuously disclosed various particulars of the past state of her mind, spoke with freedom and simplicity of her present entire dependence, as a guilty and humbled being, on the Divine mercy, as obtained alone through the merits of Jesus Christ; and expressed a calm and brightening hope of happiness hereafter,—a happiness of which the essential principle would be, a deliverance, complete and eternal, from all that places the soul out of harmony with God.

She testified thankfulness for her long sickness itself, and for those attendant circumstances of it which had been so favourable for the course of discipline through which she had been conducted. Her directions for the disposal of some little concerns, her recollections of the kindness of various friends, her wishes for the welfare of survivors, her references to the truths and consolations of religion, her notice of surrounding occurrences, were all expressed as in the explicit anticipation of the impending change. She beheld the vision of another world growing, in each brief lapse of time, more plainly discernible through the shades of death; and was waiting, in expectation and in readiness,



for the signal. She retained an undiminished exercise of intellect, the most perfect presence of mind, in her latest hours. In nearly the last, her devout sentiments toward the Supreme Benefactor were mingled with kindness toward the mortal friends she was going to leave; and she named with affectionate gratitude those who had endeavoured to aid her preparation for this final scene. As she felt the struggle of the living principle fast subsiding, and when the power of utterance was on the point of wholly failing, she observed, (and repeated the expression "Once to die!") how truly this was the mysterious act of dying. After every attempt to speak had ceased, and her eyes had closed, a few moments before the last perceptible breathing, she made, by a gentle movement of her hand, a sign which her attendants perfectly understood as expressive of her adieu.

The earthly form, as soon as the spirit was fled, appeared reduced almost to a shadow. Life had been protracted, through the energy of that spirit, till the extreme resources of animal nature were consumed.

The deep regrets of the affectionate relatives for the loss of such a being were consoled by the benignant light of Heaven, which had thus been shed on the concluding period of her life; for amidst their sorrow they could rejoice in the assurance that, through the sovereign efficacy of Divine grace and the atoning sacrifice, she is gone to a world where it will be unspeakable delight to meet her again.

Within a short time of her death, she requested her favourite aunt, who was alone attending on her, to enforce it, as from her, on her younger sisters, "that they apply themselves to the great concern while"——. Here she was stopped by a cough and extreme difficulty of breathing, and her aunt finished the sentence for her by saying, "while in their youth." As soon as she recovered the power of speaking, she said, very pointedly, "No—while in their health;" signifying that that was a more uncertain, and might be a much more transient thing, than even their youth.

## LETTERS

FROM MR. FOSTER TO MISS SAUNDERS.

## I.

Stapleton, September 11, 1824.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—When I tell you that almost from your childhood I have taken an unusual degree of interest in your character, and that since you approached to maturity I have been gratified in being regarded by you as one of your sincerest friends, you will allow my claim to the right of expressing to you the deep concern which I share with your most excellent relatives, for your present state of languor and increasing illness. Your return to your friends was looked for with very different anticipations. We hoped to see you in firm health, with a vigour fitted, as we were sure it would have been devoted, to the zealous prosecution of every valuable improvement, and with the prospects of life extending before you; and you would yourself quite naturally entertain some pleasing and youthful visions in relation to those prospects.—But, Miss Sarah, I think, I cannot be mistaken in believing that you were never beguiled, in any such measure as young persons generally are, with the flatteries and delusions of sanguine imagination. I am confident that the fair forms of temporal hope would often fade under your deep reflection, aided by your observation of actual human life; and that you have fully admitted the conviction, even in the bright morning of life, that *it is really true*—what the warnings of religion, and the testimony of experience constantly affirm to us—that a profound sense of dissatisfaction and disappointment attends on all that this world has to give. And to a mind like yours the solemn idea will, inevitably, have often presented itself,—as one which it were perfect folly to endeavour to exclude and forget,—that the *end* will come, and that the intermediate time will at the longest soon pass away. Therefore, a state of sickness and suffering does not come on you, as it would on the gay and thoughtless young persons as a mere sad surprise, a melancholy blast of every cherished interest

and hope, a disappointment of all your anticipations. It comes as that which many a serious reflection has admonished you *might* come—might come even thus prematurely. And it is most consolatory to your friends to have reason to believe that these reflections have been made conducive, under the Divine instruction, to prepare you for the visitation.

My dear young friend, it would have been delightful to all that best know your value, and the very uncommon measure of mental endowment that Heaven has conferred on you, to see you advancing in every virtue and estimable attainment, progressively exemplifying the power of religion, and enjoying its happiness, and exerting a beneficent influence on all around you, with a prospect of your long surviving all of us your elder friends. But if *He*, who is the Sovereign and gracious Disposer of our life and all our interests, has determined otherwise, it is, indeed Miss Sarah, *it is because that will be better*; and you yourself will know and pronounce it to be better. O! *it is better* to be a happy and immortal being in the presence and enjoyment of the infinite good, and mingling in the society of angelic spirits, and of the “spirits of the just” that are already associated with them, than to stay in this world, in even the happiest lot that Providence ever allots to the most favoured of mortals. To make a complete, final, triumphant escape from all the evils of our degraded and afflicted nature, and this melancholy world; to be clearly and for ever beyond the region, and beyond all possibility, of sin and sorrow—this *is* worth resigning all on earth to attain. It is worth resigning every imagined felicity on earth that you, Sarah, ever ventured, in the most sanguine moment of your musings and hopes, to picture to yourself as possible to your attainment in this world.

Your pious and estimable father is now inconceivably happier than all whom he left behind. And if you be prematurely called (as human judgment accounts premature) to go where he is gone, you will look back on the moment of removal with a divine delight; and not all that is the most desirable and noble on earth will raise in your happy spirit one transient wish that you had had a more protracted appointment here. But, my dear friend, do you shrink

from the solemn transition, lest the grand interest should not be safe,—lest you should be found unprepared to meet Him, whose summons is to be obeyed? You are too reflective to indulge a thoughtless and presumptuous confidence, and far too well instructed in evangelical truth to place any dependence on merits of your own. That truth requires us to sink, under conscious guilt, in deep humiliation before our righteous Judge, to fall before Him in self-condemnation and penitence, but only in order to rise in hope, and faith, resting on the *great atonement*. Living or dying we have no other resource; but we have *THIS* resource; and *this* is *all-sufficient*. In the strength of *this*, we can approach the Divine Throne, to plead for pardon, and to plead against the fear of death; and on the strength of *this*, how many, on the very brink of death, amidst the shadows and gleams of approaching eternity, have exulted to make the grand, and final adventure; and so I trust will my young friend, whenever, be it sooner or later, she shall be called to leave mortality behind.

The grand point is, to be *quite in earnest*, persistingly so, in applying to the heavenly and Almighty Power, for the communication of pardoning, assisting, transforming grace, for victory over unbelief, and for a happy immortality. The result of such persisting earnestness is *infallible*.

I trust my dear friend's mind is too well fortified to be pained by my having so unequivocally referred to the too probable issue of her present illness. You know, Sarah, how happy all your friends would be if the presages might prove to be mistaken; but at the same time, I cannot doubt, you are aware how strong those presages are deemed to be. You will calmly and piously prepare for what men call *the worst*,—but what to you, if such should be the event, will, I hope and trust, be infinitely *the best*. Believe me to be, my dear young friend, with the most cordial regard, yours,

J. FOSTER.

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## II.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—The kind and candid spirit in which I am assured that you received a former expression of interest in your present situation and prospects, would be enough to give me confidence that any renewed suggestions to you of the same serious tendency will not be unwelcome. But independently of this, I could well trust to the vigorous character of your mind, and to the habits acquired by its having often been directed to grave and high subjects in the season of health, for assurance of not being regarded by you as a too officious friend and monitor. Your mind, Miss Sarah, has been no stranger to thoughts of the higher order; and the conviction of your judgment could not, for years past, have left it possible to admit even a transient imagination that it would be a happiness to be able to turn from them and forget them. You are not therefore now, by the departure of health, and the receding of life, forced with a mortal reluctance on a scene of thought fearfully foreign, desolate, and uncongenial with all that you had willingly given your attention to before. Be thankful for every previous monition, every conviction, and emotion of conscience, by which you are the better prepared for that deeper seriousness of thought required by your present situation. And do not repine, do not account it a hard appointment, that, while so many of your youthful age are at this hour sprightly and volatile, and intent alone on the vanities of sublunary pleasure and hope, *you* are summoned to give your mind to an employment of the gravest importance. You, Miss Sarah, appear to be now approaching the moment from which you are certain to be occupied with great subjects and emotions for ever, and you will feel the wisdom and necessity of employing much of the perhaps very limited previous space of time in such an exercise of thought as may conduce to prepare you, through the Divine assistance, for entering happily on that never ending train. And allow me, my dear friend, to suggest to you, that, if you shall suffer, as may be expected, a progressive debility of your frame, the mind will too probably sympathize with it, and become less able to sustain the effort of fixed and prolonged thought. It will, therefore, be happy if you *now*

leave nothing undone that you may *then* be unable to do. You are not surprised at this explicitness in anticipating the result of your illness, being, I believe, aware that all the fond hopes of your friends are surrendered; but surrendered to the disposing will of unerring wisdom and goodness. But yet, how difficult it is for them to realize in prospect the affecting fact! Last evening I had a strange feeling of mysteriousness and wonder, which seemed to say, "*Can* it be, that the being who is now sensibly *here*, the present living object of so much interest, conversing with us, and listening to us, will actually, a little while hence, be withdrawn from the intercourse of mortal society, and from the world; and have entered into a community of another order, and be in the very midst of those realities which can be unveiled to no inhabitant of the earth? *Can* there be so vast a change? and *can* she not be delayed and detained by her friends, to await that change at some period many years distant? But if she *cannot*, it is because her heavenly Father requires her presence elsewhere, and calls her away. And surely it is because he wills that she shall not be exposed to the sorrows and the sinful influences of an evil world,—and because the Redeemer of her soul has already prepared for her a happier abode."

The assurance of this, my dear friend, will be an animating consolation to your friends, when, if such prove to be the Divine destination, you shall have left them,—left them but for a while, for it will be their pleasing hope to see you again;—and all of us, if it is our appointment to stay here a little longer than you, shall feel one persuasive and attractive inducement more, from your removal to the invisible world, to carry our contemplations to that scene. I hope, Sarah, it is not needful to repeat the admonition to you, in terms of strong enforcement, that the time is most precious. It would indeed be so, though there were the probability that years of it were yet to come and be expended; but how emphatically important the passing days and hours become when they are apparently approaching the latest allotment of time; when the omens are, that there will be but a short interval before your adieu to this world; before you will cease to be within the sphere of this earth, and these skies; before you will have passed beyond

the region and the time for the exercise of prayer, contrition, and faith; and before you will feel the mightiest evidence that you are actually in an economy new and inexpressibly solemn. The relations of that sublime economy are closely laying hold upon you; and it is the dictate of the soberest reason to be solicitous to be conformed and adapted to them, so as to be prepared to enter into its reality without danger and fear. And think in what manner the employment of the concluding portion of life and time will be looked back upon when the spirit has entered there!—of what value, of what importance, the earnest continued supplications to the Divine mercy will then be felt to have been! What joy it will then be to have given all diligence to *this*!—to feel that the great concluding labour of life was effectually done!

With regard to what it *is* that constitutes a right preparation for going into the presence of God, there needs no minute theological discriminations. To be reconciled to him, to be at peace with him, to enjoy his forgiveness and love,—*that* is the condition for appearing before him, and abiding in his presence for ever. The fatal thing to be removed and destroyed that *we may* be at peace with him, is sin. It is because our nature is depraved that we are not in affectionate harmony with him; and it is because we are guilty that we dread him. And that which renders *him* an object of dread, is what causes also, the dread of death: “the sting of death is sin.” The conscience of a being who is solicitous to be prepared for death, and delivered from its fear, has to take solemn account of sin, not merely, nor chiefly, as a certain measure of direct practical transgression, but in a far deeper, wider character. There may have been but little, comparatively, of this more palpable form of guilt in the life of a young person of virtuous habits and favourable situation.

The grand evil, my dear friend, is the *deficiency* of the heart towards God and spiritual and eternal interests. It is the not being animated with his love, not gratefully and habitually regarding him as the source of all good, not acknowledging him as supreme goodness itself, not thinking and acting constantly with the express purpose of pleasing him, not desiring a communion with him, not earnestly

aspiring to his presence as the greatest and the final felicity; in short, "loving the creature more than the Creator." Add to this, the not feeling a restless, unappeasable *impatience* of such a perverted, unhappy state of the heart, and an indifference to the grand expedient of the Divine appointment and mercy for the redemption of the soul from this state of evil and from its consequences, by Jesus Christ. This, all this, is the fatal malady of our nature, of which practical sins are but the extreme indications and results, and which may exist in sad prevalence within, though those external iniquities be but few and slight, according to the ordinary standard of the world's morality. It is *here* that we need pardoning mercy to remove the guilt, and the operations of the Divine Spirit to transform our nature and reverse its tendencies. It is thus alone that we can be made fit for the communion and felicity of heaven. And these all-important pre-requisites are promised and imparted through our Mediator and his great sacrifice. How important that we have a profound and affecting conviction, that these blessings are the all in all for us, for here and hereafter; and that we "look to Jesus," as the sacred medium of their communication, with the grateful affection, and confiding faith, claimed by him who has offered himself as an atonement for our sins, and opened for us an entrance into the eternal paradise. With these convictions of guilt powerfully impressed, and this view of the Mediator, by which all our guilt can be removed from the soul, and dis severed from its destiny in the life to come, we shall approach, both earnestly and "boldly, to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need."

So may you feel, my dear friend; so may you importunately petition the Almighty Power; and then you may look forward with complacency to the final hour, and with exultation to the prospect of all that is beyond it. You will perform the last great act of mortal existence as one who is ascending with dignity to a higher existence, in a state whither your pious friends will, ere long, follow to rejoin you. I will confidently assure myself of your friendly sentiment in receiving this one more slight testimony of an interest in what you are, and are going to be.



Methinks if I had been a person in the prime of life and health, I should have felt some reluctance to adopt such a train of admonition. It would have seemed as if I were saying,—“*I* have long to live, and to see and enjoy all I could wish of this world, but *you* are soon to leave it.” It might be, to apprehension, something like assuming a vantage ground. But a person in the decline of life, and a greater decline of health, is approaching much nearer to community of situation with one who is preparing to make the last surrender. And the thoughts which I suggest to you, my dear young friend, I feel the necessity of inculcating with all possible force on myself.

Believe me, most sincerely yours,

J. FOSTER.

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### III.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—I will presume that one more short expression of friendly regard will not be unacceptable to you. While your friends feel they have no power to arrest and detain you, in that progress in which they see you still retiring, by a slow gradation, beyond their earthly circle, their affectionate interest will faithfully accompany you to the last, and will follow you when they cannot, for a while, convey to you the testimonies of it. I repeat, *for a while*; and the melancholy sentiment, which would otherwise sadden every communication with a friend in such circumstances as yours, is alleviated, is sometimes suspended, by the pleasing hope of attaining, after a while, a recovered presence and communication, in a state where there will be no impending event to threaten their loss. You have been very much favoured, in the gentle and protracted manner in which you have been thus far conducted toward the point where a new scene is to open before you, and to receive you, and which has already received so many who have “sought a better country.” Several months since, your friends were warned that they were not to expect to retain you so long. The absence of the pain, and, in a considerable degree, of the distressing restlessness

which in many instances attend the complaint, has saved the vital principle from being harassed and rapidly exhausted. This privilege, of prolonged time and exemption from severe suffering, has been a valuable indulgence to you from the Author and Disposer of life. And I feel assured that you estimate it aright, and are availing yourself of it to the most important account. You have had a great, a very great and difficult object to accomplish. For a person in the vernal animation, vigour, and prospects of youth (prospects in your case unusually flattering), to come deliberately to the decided position of being willing to surrender life, is indeed an arduous achievement. A generous sympathy is excited at seeing a young person making this noble struggle, and succeeding; a sympathy of that kind which we feel in beholding the faculties and virtues of some estimable being brought to the trial of a new and formidable crisis. You, Sarah, have been brought to this hard conflict of the soul; and it is a most grateful pleasure to be able to congratulate you, as I am assured I may with truth, on having overcome. It is a high attainment, eminently worth all it has cost you; all the sickness, the solicitude, the serious thought, the prayer, by which you have been exercised and trained to it. If you revert to some preceding period, say but a year since, and make the supposition that you could then have been warned by some infallible prescience, that you would at this time be as near as you now deem yourself to be to the conclusion of life, you probably can feel that, notwithstanding your having been previously no stranger to serious consideration, you would have felt you had before you a fearful difficulty, in the attainment of a resignation to so early a removal. You would have looked on this difficulty with a degree of dismay; like a traveller arrived in front of a vast and steep mountain, which he must pass over, and which he views with an apprehensive and anxious question within himself, *how it can possibly be surmounted*. Think, then, what gratitude you owe to that good Spirit, that has enabled you to overcome the natural horror of the great change, to resign yourself to the Divine appointment with a full persuasion that it is a wise and gracious one, and to look with fortitude at the apparently near approach of the event. Do you not think, that this

is an incomparably greater attainment than any, or all, of your past life? Would you—if it were possible such a thing might be placed at your choice—would you, Sarah, deliberately choose to be carried back to the state of health and promising appearance for long life, *but with the loss of what you have gained since your illness*—the loss of this resigned willingness to part with life? If you would *not*, you feel that you have gained something *better* than health and life. Yet even this grand advantage itself is but a small possession in comparison with what, I trust, you are next to gain.

Your judgment will have been seriously exerted to verify the genuineness of the principle of your acquiescence in the Divine will, and of your deliverance from the dread of dissolution. You have understood Christianity too well to have been, at any moment, capable of being content with any thing of the nature of a mere Stoical submission and resolution *to meet what is inevitable*. In reading the speculations, and some recorded examples, of this temper of mind, one has felt to be looking on a spectacle hardly less melancholy to behold than an utter thoughtlessness of death on the one hand, or an unsubdued, insuperable horror of it on the other. For our attaining *such* fortitude or consolation (if it can be so named), there was no need for the Son of God to come to deliver from the fear of death, by dying a sacrifice for our sins, and “bringing life and immortality to light.” The true victory over the fear of death consisting in a good hope of immortal happiness beyond it, is that in which the soul is fortified, not by a cold and desperate firmness to sustain, because we cannot help it, a grievous loss, but by the contemplation of an infinite gain. And, according to the word of Divine truth, mightily seconded by the inward consciousness of every humble and contrite spirit, that hope can find no solid ground to rest upon but the efficacy of the sufferings and intercession of Christ. And we really and effectually place our hope on this ground, when, with a firm belief in the perfect efficacy of the work of Christ, we are enabled also to direct our affections to him as having accomplished it, and to desire and pray earnestly to be interested in it, so as to appropriate its efficacy, to rely upon it, and plead it before

the throne of the Divine Justice, renouncing from the heart every other dependence. This sincere and earnest desire, this strife and application of the soul directed to the great Source of mercy, this pertinacious going forth of the spirit to God as granting pardon and justification through Jesus Christ: this is the essential thing. A state of mind truly and prevailingly such as this, has the Divine promise of *safety* to the supreme interest, though it may not always banish every trembling apprehension. There may be granted to this state a more entire, or a less absolutely complete, sense of *assurance*; but generally it will result in such a satisfactory hope, as will predominate on the whole over the fear of death. May this happiness be yours, my dear young friend, in advancing degrees and full confirmation!

When the soul looks from this high evangelic ground of confidence in the Divine mercy, on the near approach of death, how changed is the appearance of that formidable power from the aspect which it is wont to present to our timorous nature! It now no longer appears in the almost exclusive light of a *doom*, as the execution of an awful sentence, as a rending of our vital connections with the present state of being. True, it is all this; but it is also something infinitely different and better. It is now beheld as a mode of transition to a higher state of existence,—a painful mode, indeed, and of alarming character, from the vastness and the unknown nature of the expected change; but perfectly safe, because the Almighty Friend will be *nigh* to answer to the call, "Into thy hand I commit my spirit," and to support his feeble servant in the last conjuncture in which that servant can suffer or be intimidated. It is regarded, too, as a change absolutely indispensable in order to the attainment of that to which every pious and enlightened spirit aspires; inasmuch as *without* some such mighty change, it is impossible for the spiritual nature to be set free from the mean, corruptible, mortal, elements with which it is mingled, and above all, from sin. It is plainly seen, that the soul *must* go into another state of existence, in order to the attainment of an eternal innocence and sanctity, to the attainment of that restoration to the Divine likeness which will bring the soul into affectionate com-

munion with the Father of spirits. How obvious is it, too, that there must be a change, like that accomplished through death, in order to the enlargement of our faculties, to the extension of the sphere of their never-remitting, never-tiring exertion, to their enjoying a vivid perception of truth, in a continually expanding manifestation of it, and to their entering, sensibly and intimately, into happier and more exalted society than any that can exist on earth. Sometimes, while you are thinking of that world unseen which is now an object of your faith, but may soon be disclosed to you in its wondrous reality, it will occur to you, how many most interesting inquiries to which there is here no reply, will, to you, be changed into knowledge!—how many things will be displayed to your clear and delighted apprehension, which the most powerful intellect, while yet confined in the body, conjectures and inquires after in vain. What a mighty scene of knowledge and felicity there is, which it is necessary to die in order to enter into! Yes, to be fully, sublimely, unchangeably happy, it is necessary to die. For the soul to be redeemed to liberty and purity,—to rise from darkness to the great vision of truth,—to be resumed into the presence of its Divine Original,—to enter into the communion of the Mediator of the new testament and of the spirits of the just, it is necessary to die!

I hope that the prospect of arriving at that happiness will animate you, dear Sarah, through the remaining period during which your mortal friends shall be permitted to detain you among them; and that in approaching the dark confine which you have to pass, you will possess so effectual a superiority over the dread of it, imparted by the all-gracious Spirit, through working in you a still more and more confirmed faith in the Redeemer, that your gradual retiring from your friends may have far less of the mournful character of going to bid them adieu, than of the cheerful one of inviting them in their due time to follow you.

I remain, my dear young friend,

Yours, with the most friendly regard,

JOHN FOSTER.

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## IV.

*December 31, 1824.*

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—One more of the great marked periods of our time is just closing upon us. Tomorrow there will be interchanged an infinite number of expressions of felicitation and good wishes. The year will begin with a profusion of gaieties, convivialities, and amusements. And think how many hearts are full of lively anticipations of the wants of the year,—how many minds busy with the projects to be accomplished in it. Innumerable youthful ones, especially, are indulging and reciprocating delightful fancies of pleasures, adventures, or attainments, which they are confident the coming year will lavish on them,—a year through which, and a very long train of subsequent ones, they make sure of their continuance in this world. Such vivacities, schemes, and hopes, are dilating the hearts and inspiriting the companies, of multitudes of your co-evals. But you, dear Sarah, are left apart. No lively meeting expects *you* to be of the party. No projects for the year are formed with the calculation that *you* are to be a participator. Every indulged thought and scheme of social, terrestrial happiness leaves *you* out. You are regarded as bearing the signs of another destination—as a marked victim, from which all are to retire.

But, in the view of a contemplative mind, you become, from this very situation, invested with a far higher character. There seems to hover round you a certain strange and mysterious importance, as of a being belonging less to this world than to another and greater. And a friend like me, with a strong native disposition to pensive and even melancholy reflection, and now by the decline of life continually reminded of its termination, feels it a far more interesting employment to communicate thoughts to you, in your present situation, than to share the intercourse of the most cheerful society of persons in health.

Since the time when you became convinced that your life was approaching its conclusion, and since you have been enabled to yield a submission to the appointment, you must have felt yourself on a strangely new ground

of existence. Perhaps there are moments when you can hardly realize to yourself the fact that the case is so. Indeed, I cannot sometimes without difficulty do it myself, when I see you, or think of you, and recollect how lately you were in the utmost vigour of health. At the beginning of this year what an effort of thought it would have required but to imagine yourself in such a situation at the end of it. But, dear Sarah, how much more it surpasses your utmost power of thought to imagine the situation you shall be in by the time that the year now commencing shall have come to an end! And how striking to think that it *will* be an *actual situation*, that you will know and feel what it is, and that you will be able to compare it with the conceptions previously endeavoured to be formed of it; though it will not be permitted you by the laws of that economy to convey an image of it to your surviving friends. But I trust in the Divine mercy, dear Sarah, that it will be to you a state of such felicity as you will be sensible that no language which they can understand could adequately describe; and then it will appear to you but a very little thing to have *died* to attain it. And then, how far will you be from all regret that your life on earth has been so short.

It is perfectly natural that some emotions of this regret should at times have arisen in your mind, since your illness assumed a decidedly fatal character. Without indulging a rebellious sentiment against Supreme Wisdom, you may have suffered many a deeply painful struggle between the fond attachment to life and your consciousness of the ominous indications that you were losing it. You may have pensively mused on your lot, and thought, *Why* so brief and rapid a passage through time? *Why* smitten in the opening prime of life, when my faculties are but just reaching to maturity, when I have but just begun to make my experiment on the possibilities of good in this life, and when I felt an impulse and an energy that would have carried me into that experiment with such distinguished advantage? *Why* appointed to encounter the dread *enemy* in my path at so early a stage, while I see such numbers around me going freely on in theirs? *Why* just *show* me this world, to tell me that nothing in it is to be mine?

My dear friend, it would have been contrary to the principles of our nature for you *not* to have felt some emotions of this kind; you may have felt them at some moments with a bitter pang. The merciful Father above has great indulgence and compassion for a sentiment which he has himself planted in the heart, by the constitution which he has given it. And he does not require from his frail mortal child an acquiescence in his sovereign will without unfolding to her in prospect something which will be a compensation, and infinitely more than a compensation for what she is called to resign. He thus, as it were, sets aside his absolute right of sovereignty to appeal to your judgment and your gratitude, by exhibiting to you a grand advantage to be given you in the mortal exchange. This sublime object of hope, combined with a firm faith in his infinite wisdom and benignity, is the powerful principle to suppress every murmur, and to reconcile you, and much more than merely reconcile you, to pass, at his call, from the scene of life and youth through the gloom of death—the *transient* gloom, dear Sarah—for how quickly when you arrive at it will you pass through it, and beyond it!

Besides these higher considerations, you will sometimes recur to that (which has been adverted to before) of the true estimate of this life and this world. You can *now* make that estimate under a clearer light than at the beginning of the year that has now closed. But did you really ever, with a confidence that lasted any considerable time, represent to yourself a life of very high and nearly continuous felicity, as possible in this world? Have you ever *seen an instance* which excited your envy in a very high degree—an actual condition the exact parallel to which you thought would satisfy your wishes? Or, if you have seen such a model displayed in *fiction*, did you fail to perceive some great *fallacy* in the representation, when you considered for a moment *how* it could be realized in actual life? Did you *ever*, for an hour, for a minute, seriously fancy you could perhaps select and bring together, at your will, all, or a very preponderating majority of, the materials and elements of temporal happiness, and combine them into an *actual* state in which you could feel an entire



complacency; thus constructing for yourself a state of life (a state to be *real*) by an assemblage of what seemed to you the very best part of one person's lot, and of another's and another's? Could you overlook even the circumstance, that persons of your sex have, as peculiar to it, many things against them for the happiness of life? In short, did you ever, either at once or by successive additions to the imaginary model, sketch for yourself a condition of life, and then deliberately say—"This would be to be deeply, amply, satisfactorily happy; and this shall assuredly be realized in *my* advancing life?" No, Sarah; I do believe that your youthful imagination never did, for more than a passing moment, flatter you to this degree of beguilement. I am persuaded, too, that in the recent period of your life you could not have ventured, and would have been checked by your conscience if you had attempted, to imagine any scheme of happiness as satisfactory, in which *religion* should not have been an essential part. But *that* changes the whole theory of happiness in this life; when you admitted *that* into your scheme, you admitted that all temporal felicity is most imperfect and precarious, and treacherous too; you admitted that this life, this world itself, "is not our rest," is not the scene for a true and elevated happiness, and that whenever the will of God shall be so, it is even better to die than to live. When, therefore, you look on life, with all its possible temporal felicities as denied you, you will calmly estimate what it is only that you have surrendered.

But, my dear friend, I trust that such reflections on the vanity of mortal life, on the utter unsatisfactoriness of all sublunary good, even supposing it to have been fully **ATTAINABLE** by you had your life been prolonged, are now become almost superfluous to you; for I am happy to believe that you have been enabled, in the prevailing state of your feeling, to make the surrender of your life, and of all that might have seemed possible to be attained and enjoyed in its prolongation, to the decree of your merciful Father; that you can say, with cordial acquiescence, "Thy will be done," while you see the world which so lately extended its prospects before you, now all retiring behind you. Not that you can with *invariable* indifference look

back on what is departing; there will be moments when your spirit will "cast a lingering look behind;" when you will have cause to wish you could make a more entire transfer of the warm interest of the heart from the life that you are leaving to which you are approaching. But I trust that you will be favoured with Divine assistance that the *habit* of your mind shall be that of looking resignedly back, and with intentness and earnest devotional solicitude to that which is before you. There may at some moments arise in your mind a certain strange wondering and dubious emotion, which almost questions the reality of your situation, that almost prompts you to say, "*Can it be, is it a real truth, that I shall be no longer here—that a few weeks hence I shall actually not be conversing with these friends, not inhabiting these apartments, not reading these books, not looking out upon this scene of nature and human existence, not praying in the body to the Father of my spirit? Is it a reality, and no dream, that even now a commissioned angel is waiting his great Master's signal to come to this very apartment where I think, or where I slumber?*"

But the solemn fact still returns upon your consciousness with unequivocal, unchanging evidence. You feel the entire conviction still abiding that it *is* even so, that you *will* soon have left these friends, these apartments, these occupations, this body; and that the eyes of your spirit *will* open on the messenger from heaven. How affecting to your friends, dear Sarah, in an hour that is to arrive, to find that, unseen to them, he has come, and that their young friend is gone. But how happy for them to have good cause to believe that your departing spirit rose up in a sacred transport to accompany him! And while they cherish you in affectionate remembrance as long as they stay on earth, how often will they indulge a profound, contemplative wonder what the nature of that state may be to which they will rejoice to assure themselves that you have ascended, through your interest in the great Sacrifice—through the merits of Him who died that penitent believing sinners might live, and live for ever. Think, my dear friend, of Him as dying, and having, by devoting himself to die, conquered death, divested it of its terrors, consecrated and dignified it, and transformed it into a friend. Think of his having enabled you to call

death itself your friend, that will do for you one grand act to emancipate you from all frailty and mortality, and sorrow and sin. Pray earnestly for an assured interest in that death which hath so divinely transformed our otherwise dark and gloomy destiny. You cannot feel gratitude enough to the Divine Benefactor for the inestimable advantage which your affliction, and the solemn anticipations on which it has fixed your mind, have been made the means of imparting to you, in revealing to you how much you have needed of enlightening and sanctifying grace. It is well that your conscience has been caused to speak to you in a sterner language, that you have been compelled to become sensible of corruption in the soul, that its pride has been shown to you in its true character, and that you are made to deplore that impatience which would complain even against God. This is a painful and mortifying manifestation to you, dear Sarah; but oh, it is most salutary and most indispensable. Do not turn from this self-abasing view. You feel you have a most direct interest in being aware of all that there is in a mind which is expecting and preparing to appear shortly in the Divine presence; in being aware, especially, of all that requires to be at once changed and pardoned in order to an accepted and happy appearance there. Every deeper insight into our nature is sure to detect still more and more of what ought to extinguish its pride, and excite the most fervent petitions for the operation of that almighty power which alone can renew this depraved nature, and for an interest in the merits of Him who "had no sin." A young person, with a conscience in a great measure free from the charge of the external practical kinds of sin, is extremely unapt to admit the conviction of a deep, sad, intrinsic corruption in the soul. And I have no doubt, my dear friend, that it has been for the very purpose of aggravating your sense and conviction of this fact, that you have been made to experience a *delay* of that full consolation, and that imparted spiritual strength, for which you have petitioned the Divine mercy. You acknowledge that this actually *has* made you more sensible of pride, impatience, and the mighty difficulty of submission and self-denial. Is it not well that this internal evil has been thus disclosed to your knowledge and conscience? Be thankful, dear Sarah, for this discipline of

humiliation. And persevere to pray for both the pardon and conquest of all sin, as a preparation for a world of purity and endless felicity; and while you do so, the whole truth of God is pledged to you that you will have the joy of final success. My ever dear young friend, in time and eternity, I remain yours with best regards and wishes,

J. FOSTER.

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V.

*Monday, January 10, 1825.*

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—In seeing you last evening I could not help perceiving more evidently than in any former instance the painful oppression of your illness, though I was not entirely aware till afterwards how greatly it has been aggravated within the preceding week. After so considerable a space of time during which it had not appeared very decidedly progressive, this too visible change comes painfully on your friends with an impression as of something new. Though they had habitually looked forward to one inevitable event, it had seemed possible that you might remain yet many days within reach of their affectionate attention. This I had myself been willing to anticipate when I wrote to you on the last day of the departed year. I hoped I might yet see you a considerable number of times more, though yet well aware that *any* time might prove the last. But now, dear Sarah, it does appear that the period appointed to you by Him, in whose merciful hands you are, is very near its termination. You can believe with what deep regret this conviction is admitted; but I hope that such regret is what *you* feel far less than any of your friends; and I confidently trust in the Divine mercy that you have no cause to feel it. In this acceleration of the malady that preys on your life we regard you as happier than any of us, and happier than you have ever been yet, in being so near to a happiness that no pain or grief can ever invade. How soon our dear friend may be at the very "fountain of life," in possession of a joy which, if it could be but even in part revealed to those who survive, they

would be impatient to pass through death to share with her! And they will humbly hope in the same all-sufficient merits that she relies upon, that at length they shall arrive to share it with her.

May the Divine assistance be largely granted to you, dear Sarah, in this your time of most urgent need, to enable you to look forward to the approaching hour with a strong and overcoming faith—a faith that most simply and entirely relies on the complete atonement and the perfect righteousness of the Mediator. Implore the heavenly Father, as one of his children that has not many more prayers to address to him from this dark region of sin, and sorrow, and death, that he may enable you to go, as it were, out of yourself, and repose your soul, with all its interests and hopes, on that perfect work of our Lord and Saviour. It is a complete salvation for you to rely upon, independent of any virtues, and in triumph over conscious and lamented sins in your own nature. It is expressly as being unable to attain virtues and graces to satisfy the Divine law and an enlightened conscience,—exactly as being conscious of defect and sin which you condemn and deplore,—it is in this very character and condition that you are to embrace the salvation accomplished through the sufferings of the Redeemer. And it comes to you in a Divine fulness which pardons all sin, and needs no virtues of your own for your acceptance before the righteous Judge. It sets aside at once all that you can attain, and all that you condemn, in yourself and of your own, and gives you a blessed acquittance on another ground. It makes no stipulation or previous condition for some certain established degrees of one virtuous principle or another in your soul. It tells you that all the degrees of all the virtues are equally incompetent and foreign to the great purpose, and invites and conjures you to cast yourself wholly on the all-sufficiency of Him in whom all fulness of merit and righteousness dwells. It avowedly takes you as defective and sinful, notwithstanding all that you labour and strive, and says, “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away sin.” How constantly, through the New Testament, is it represented that this committing of the soul to the merciful and exalted Saviour, *just as it is*, with all its conscious weakness, incapacity, and self-condemnation, is the

grand point of safety and immortal hope, is the escape from the oppression of guilt and the fear of death. Oh then, dear Sarah, do not exhaust your spirit, and afflict your heart, to attain, as it were, a self-commanded state of the mind, a subjugation of all its wrong tendencies and emotions to its own absolute authority, *as a pre-requisite to the enjoyment of a sense of the Divine mercy and acceptance.* I shall not be mistaken in this representation. It is most necessary and salutary to have a deep conviction of the evils of the heart, to look at them, lament them, and strive against them. But then, it were utter injustice to the design of the Divine mercy in Jesus Christ for the applicant to that mercy to feel as if bound down to the melancholy task, the desperate labour, of acquiring a conquest over those evils *as a thing requisite* IN ORDER to be qualified to appropriate that mercy, and all its blessed consolations. Oh no, my ever dear friend, come to that mercy first, and last,—always. Come to the Divine Saviour AS the subject of those evils, and seeking the pardon of them through his blood. They are the *very reason* for coming instantly and continually to him who died that the humble suppliant might obtain forgiveness of them, and the almighty operation of his grace to subdue them, as far as in this mortal state they may be subdued. Implore every hour as the *primary* thing—as the *supreme* thing, that you may confide yourself wholly to the Saviour of the world, and then all the internal evils that you condemn and deplore will, AS GUILT, be totally and for ever detached from your soul, and, as *harassing enemies*, will be partly repressed before your final deliverance, and will be triumphantly escaped from in the mortal hour. And, my dear Sarah, will not that be a deliverance worth dying for? When you shall have overcome, and shall be among those that “have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” and shall “be without fault before the throne of God,” shall you wish yourself back again in this mortal, sinful world?

There is one thing in which, upon the representation of your estimable relatives, I believe you really distress yourself greatly too much; I mean the *irritability* which you complain of often feeling to a painful excess. You really must, my dear friend, be persuaded to believe that this is owing,

in a very great degree, to the physical effect of your disorder—an effect which probably *no* person would escape in similar circumstances, and for which your merciful Father will have the most compassionate indulgence.

I wish extremely, dear Sarah, that in a communication so near the conclusion of our intercourse on earth, I could have found language to express to you the Christian consolations with more vivid and vital force and emphasis. But I pray, and do you, Sarah, continue to pray, that your Divine and Almighty Friend may be your instructor and consoler—he who is the Father of spirits and the God of all consolation.

If you would indulge me in a momentary reference to myself, I would say, that the endeavour, during your illness, to impart some instructive and consolatory suggestions to a young friend whom I have regarded with peculiar partiality from almost her childhood, has been one of the most interesting employments of any in my whole life. And to the last day of it (which I now never think of as very remote), it will be a deeply-cherished pleasure to hope I may have rendered you some real service in your most important interests, that under the Divine blessing, I may have contributed some sensible aid to your looking with resignation and complacency on the mysterious, but most undoubtedly wise and beneficent, appointment which removes you so early from life; beneficent it *is*, my dear Sarah, when it transfers you with but a moment's interval to a better. Your mortal friend will cherish the thought of not being lost to your memory even when you shall have ascended to that nobler life. But I would hope that a little prolongation yet of your presence among us will permit the pleasure of seeing you some times more. My ever dear young friend, in time and eternity, may the Almighty bring us who are losing you, happily to meet you again, never more to lose your society.

J. FOSTER.

## VI.

*Saturday, January 15th.*

The last letter, my dear friend, ~~was~~ concluded under a pensive apprehension that I might write no more lines to be read by you; it being written under the strong impression of the description given me, by your affectionate relatives, of the fast increasing pressure of your disease; and of the severe crisis which you had suffered and with difficulty survived, from the attempt to take one more view of the face of nature, before you should be conveyed to behold a fairer aspect of existence elsewhere, before you should open the eyes that will never close upon the scenes of paradise.

But as yet, and perhaps for a little while longer, you are retained within the relations of friendship on earth. They who have felt the value and attraction of the spirit that is preparing to leave them, will regard every protraction of your continuance here as a most welcome indulgence granted to *them*. But to *you*, my dear Sarah, it will be a suffering period. It is painful to think that you must experience a progressive exhaustion of the strength already so reduced, that you will feel often an oppressive languor and restlessness from which there is no escape, that disordered nature will again and again struggle in the effort for life and breath, and that the power to command and fix your thoughts will often be suspended. But, reflect what it would be to suffer all this unalleviated by the consolations of piety, with no sweet radiance beaming on the soul from a better world, with no sense of the presence and benignity of an Almighty Friend, and with an insuppressible eagerness to retain hold of departing life, in an alternation between transient delusive hopes of recovery and returning dependency. Such an instance occurred a year or two since, in this neighbourhood, in the case of a young person who was sinking under the same disease; and her religious friends thought they had never witnessed so sad a spectacle.

It is, on the contrary, one of the most delightful illustrations of the preciousness and power of the Christian faith, that it can enable a young person, arrested in the full flush and animation of opening life by a fatal malady, to resign that life calmly to the will of the all-wise and gracious Dis-



poser—to say with devout and grateful acquiescence, “Thy will be done,”—to commend the soul to Him who died for us and rose again, and ever lives to intercede for us; and to look beyond this world to the region of the true, and blessed, and expansive, and never-dying existence. Heaven grant you, in a happy measure, dear Sarah, these elevating sentiments, growing stronger as your mortal frame grows weaker. May your heart feel this living power from the Eternal Source of life—these principles of the soul’s true vitality, the precursors of the new and immortal life—to soothe and animate you through the remaining short period of your abode in a state of sickness and death. But still it must be a period of suffering for you, my ever dear friend. And it is you, you yourself, that bear the oppressive weight. Friends sympathize; but are often reminded how far their sympathy is from an actual identity with the feelings of the sufferer. She bears *alone* the languor, and pain, and agitation of the falling tabernacle. I was most forcibly and pensively struck with this thought in seeing you last Tuesday, and still more deeply in reflection afterwards. I cannot express how affectingly the idea dwelt on my mind, “How *solitary* a thing is the fatal process!”

The friends who are habitually near her, or who see her at considerable intervals, are deeply interested in the suffering of their young friend, but they are not as she is,—they cannot place themselves in *perfect* community, cannot take a *real* share in that which presses on her,—cannot remove any part of it from her. It is her own individual self, still, that feels the sinking of nature, that breathes with labour, that is forced to painful efforts, by day and night, to relieve the vital organs. And it is in her sole person that she is approaching to the last act of life.

I have no doubt you will sometimes have had this consciousness of the solitariness, the incommunicableness, of your condition, distinctly sensible in your mind; the reflection that, whatever the persons attached to you may feel, whatever they may do and express in kind endeavours of assistance, it is still you yourself that feel the grasp of the fatal power, from which no hand can withdraw you, and that you can hold, or be held by, no mortal hand in the act of stepping off at last from the world. In the silence of

your thoughts, you have said, "*They* regard my situation with an affectionate interest, but it is still *I* alone that am in the situation; it is *I* that am sinking in the painful struggle."

But, dearest Sarah, what then? There is one all-vital relation, in which this secluded individuality and loneliness of your being and condition is absorbed and lost. The Almighty and most benignant Being encompasses you, is in perfect communication with your spirit, and all that your existence contains; he pervades your mortal and your immortal nature; maintains an inconceivably intimate intervention in it, an entire perception, and an entire regulation of all that can affect it. He involves and cherishes you in his paternal love and power. It is *in him* that you live and move, that you breathe, or yield up your breath. It is in Him that you die—to live for ever. He is not a friend that, while near you, and affectionately intent on your situation, yet stands separate from you, as mortal friends must by an insuperable necessity of nature; but *essentially* dwells in your heart and soul, and in your body too, so long as he pleases to retain it the abode of your spirit. And when he shall dissolve that connection, his love will not abandon even the mortal part of his child, but will watch over it till the appointed hour, when he will recall it from the dust, in new life and never-fading glory. You are not, then, a desolate and detached being, dissociated and alone, though mortal friends cannot be in perfect community with your condition, cannot sicken in your sickness, and expire in your dissolution. They too will, at a period which every day brings nearer, have each their own separate experience of the last conflict, and will hope to enjoy then that sense of the presence and communion of Him who is their life, which will preclude all feeling of solitariness and desolation. And in thinking of you, Sarah, at such a period, it will perhaps be more pleasing that you are gone before, and that they shall soon meet you, than it would have been to have left you behind, to follow at some unknown distance of time.

This complacency, this predominance of sweet confidence and hope, accompanying the sense of so sublime and awful a reality as that of being surrounded and pervaded by the Divine presence, in life and death, is derived to sinful beings

solely through the mediation of Him who came on earth to bear our mortal nature, our infirmities, our sorrows, and our sins; and offered up his life to reconcile us to God, whose offended justice was to be propitiated, that his mercy and love might flow into our otherwise unhappy and lost spirits. It is because our Great High Priest has made this one offering "sufficient and alone," and has passed into the heavens to secure our immortal interests there, that we can have confidence in the favour of the Almighty Power, that we can come boldly to the throne of grace, as his children, pardoned, accepted, and smiled upon; and that, in our final hour, we can gratefully exult to feel that he is most intimately with us, that it is with him and in him, at his sovereign will, and by his conducting and ever-protecting care, that we pass to a new, and as yet unrevealed state of existence. Let then, my dear Sarah, the special emphasis of your petitions to the throne of Heaven be directed to the point, that you may have a lively, affecting, and grateful apprehension of the mercy of God as manifested through Jesus Christ, and be enabled to take to yourself more and more an interest in that mercy. Pray that all which your conscience feels as guilt you may be empowered to throw off from your soul upon the perfect merit and propitiation, there to be annihilated. It is an annihilation of guilt, that is, the condemnation and the exposure to penal consequences are reversed and for ever done away, when all conscious sin is at once regretted, opposed, and with a humble, confiding effort of the soul transferred to that vast account of human guilt which our Lord sustained and bore away in his death. That which he bore away, you, my dear Sarah, do not bear as a condemning charge. You can plead to the Divine Justice this great sacrifice for sin; you can plead it *now*; and will, I firmly trust, plead it with joyful success when you shall appear more immediately before the righteous Judge.

This doctrine of our deliverance from condemnation, here and hereafter, appears the most conspicuous character of the Christian Revelation. "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many." "God has commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "He hath loved us,

and given himself for us." "There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." "By his own blood he entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." "The blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, shall purge your conscience." "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, by whose stripes we are healed." "He once suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." "He hath loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of him, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus." "By Christ all who believe are justified from all things." "He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." There are numberless expressions to the same effect, and the general tenor of the New Testament is of the same character. There are persons who revolt at such a view of the foundation of all our hopes, and would say, "Why might not the Almighty, of his *mere immediate benevolence*, pardon the offences of his frail creatures when they repent, without any such intermediation and vicarious suffering?" It is enough to answer, that Supreme Wisdom was the sole competent judge, in the universe, of what was the plan most worthy of holiness and goodness; and that, unless the New Testament be the most deceptive book *that ever was written*, the plan actually appointed is that of a suffering Mediator. If we *could not* apprehend the propriety of such an appointment for the exercise of mercy, that would be no valid objection. But, for myself, I never feel any difficulty in conceiving that, while the Divine Mercy would save guilty beings from deserved punishment, *it should yet be absolutely necessary to the honour of Eternal Justice that an awful infliction should fall somewhere*; and that if a Being from

heaven, divinely generous and beneficent, would offer *himself* to bear this infliction in place of the guilty, it would be the most worthy and illustrious expedient possible for even Infinite Wisdom to adopt.

I will conclude, my dear Sarah, with one consolatory suggestion. You may at some moment have felt a sentiment of regret that the shortness of the term assigned you in this life has denied you space for rendering an active and prolonged service to God. To repress the pain of such an emotion, consider, that the greater life will be an endless course of *activity*, and that that activity will *be all service to God*, and service in the most high and excellent nature and degree. In the figurative, emblematical representation of Heaven, in the last chapter of the Bible, it is said, and assuredly *without* a figure, "His servants shall serve Him." You have an infinite series of service to perform for Him there, to enter on which you may be more than content to quit this lower, narrower field of action. Once again, dear Sarah, I commend you to the Almighty Father and Benefactor. How much of His assistance will you need to support your patience and fortitude under the increasing weakness and weariness of ebbing life! May he impart to you the animating sense of his favour, and the still brightening hope of a happier world. May you enter, at length, into the fulness of its joy. And may I one day meet you there. I would repeat the words of a great poet, in a valedictory address to his friend:—

"May'st thou shine when the sun is quenched;  
May'st thou live and triumph when time expires."

My dear young friend, in time and throughout eternity, I repeat once more, may the blessing of Heaven rest on you.

J. FOSTER.

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## VII.

*Thursday, January 27.*

It is extremely pleasing, my dear friend, to see your period of appointed discipline so much prolonged, and to

think of you as still the hearer or the reader of the expressions of friendship. If I would once again repeat such expressions to you, it is rather as a continued gratification of that interest with which I have done it so often before, than from feeling myself able to communicate any thing very sensibly varied, or more appropriate to the situation in which you stand, looking forward upon so grand and solemn a prospect.

The conversation of last week has returned on my thoughts numberless times. I was gratified more than I can express by the friendly confidence shown in speaking so unreservedly of yourself, and of some of the sentiments and solitudes which your mind revolves in its internal consciousness.—If you have habitually felt a difficulty of being communicative on such a subject, it is to me nothing strange in the least. The case was so with myself, in youth, and has always continued so; I mean, a strong, very strong, and invincible disinclination to bring into social converse, with even the most assured and faithful friend, the religious state of my own mind. The feeling always was, — “That concern is peculiarly and emphatically *my own*; I think of it much and deeply, feel its vast importance, but *cannot* make it a subject of free communication.”—There is the utmost difference of mental temperaments in this respect. Some persons seem to feel a restless prompting to disclose all their thoughts and emotions; and when they see a quite opposite disposition they are apt unjustly to interpret it as an unfavourable indication. Your mind, my dear Sarah, is probably of the order more inclined to keep the deeper reflections and emotions secluded within; and it is not a required effect or evidence of religion, that it should reverse this constitution of the mind. Only you will permit me to observe, that whenever you do, with perhaps a degree of effort against the retiring propensity of your feelings, give expression to any of the deeper sentiments in your mind, at occasional favourable moments, you impart the liveliest interest to your affectionate domestic friends. They watch with habitual solicitude for every intimation of that internal progress, the happy result of which is to be their best consolation when they shall see you among them

no longer. They entertain a grateful assurance that all will be well, eternally well; but every expression, however brief, which confirms to them that this is also your own assurance, your own good hope, reposing on the Divine Mercy, is most welcome and valuable to them.

My ever dear young friend, you have attained one happy and enviable point of advancement. I was exceedingly struck with the calmness with which you deliberately said, "I would not wish to recover, even if that were possible." If I was somewhat surprised to hear so young a person say, that this was not so much of an attainment, for that you had never been very ardently attached to life, I did not regard you as the less to be congratulated. It was well that there should have been, in your season of health, a slighter degree of the fascination to life than is felt by youth in general. But, my dear Sarah, it is an immensely different thing to be able to avow this detachment where life is actually and sensibly approaching its termination. It is a high and felicitous attainment beyond what that former indifference would have proved to be if it had been suddenly brought to trial. And what is that to which you are conscious that you owe so great, so enviable an attainment? Is it not that you are enabled to yield yourself resignedly to your Creator's will, with a full conviction that what he wills is the best? Is it not that you behold in the great Mediator an all-sufficiency for the pardon of all your guilt, for acceptance before God, and "deliverance from the wrath to come," and that you are solemnly desiring and praying, and with a sweet hope of entire success, to be enabled to commit your soul to him? Is it not that there is granted you the hope of a happier and eternal life when this mortal one shall be resigned,—a hope which breathes peace, though it do not glow with the delight and triumph which you could desire? Is it not, my dear friend, through the efficacy of *these* Divine resources that you can maintain a decided willingness to surrender all on earth, and are waiting to hear the voice of Him who has "the keys of death and the invisible world?" My dear Sarah, be thankful for even the imperfect and partial efficacy of these "powers of the world to come;" and pray in patient faith for a continual augmentation of their sacred influence. For there is

no point of *necessary* limitation in the measure in which the efficacious power of Christianity may be experienced, both in its consolatory and animating operation, and in its corrective one. In the Divine revelation there is no one character that you are more certain that you perceive than a *spirit of promise*—a continual and often emphatic repetition of assurance, that those who sincerely seek to obtain from God more of the best wisdom, of internal spiritual power, of the consolations of hope, shall obtain it. But, at the same time, He who has thus engaged to impart the most inestimable gifts that can be received under heaven, justly maintains his own sovereign discretion with respect to the gradation and the time in which they shall be communicated; with respect to the measure of disciplinary and painful exercise which his servants shall pass through in the progress of attaining them. And think, dear Sarah, how justly he may require a humble patience, a prolonged, persevering earnestness, when all the blessings to be granted are the gifts of sovereign mercy alone—when he has already given so much—and *when it is absolutely certain that he will*, in the *whole* of his dispensation, taken together, first and last, toward his persevering petitioner, impart all that is indispensable to final safety and victory.

You complain, my dear friend, of the imperfect degree, the slow progress, of the operation of the religious principle on your mind. But should you be surprised at this? Should you wonder that you have not been suddenly or rapidly placed in a state of full conquest over every internal evil, on a serene eminence above all painful strife and disquiet of conscience? Reflect what there was to be done for you, and in you. Consider what it was to be suddenly arrested in the prime of youth, with the world opening before you, and by its influences taking possession of your spirit, and operating to assimilate its affections. And perhaps the solemn truths and warnings of religion, though familiar to your knowledge, had a feebleness of power over your heart which you may now sometimes reflect upon with regret, and not without wonder. In the very midst of this introduction to the world, and under the influence of its interests and prospects, there was suddenly laid on you an irresistible hand; all this combination of



sublunary interests was dissolved from around you, and the vision of eternity arose to your view. Under so mighty a change of your situation, think, dear Sarah, whether there was not that to be accomplished in your mind which might well require a hard and protracted process. Should you wonder that it is *still* not completed, and still accompanied, in a degree, by difficulty and grievance? Can you wonder that there are still some tendencies very imperfectly subdued, some mortifying perceptions of a corrupt nature forced upon your consciousness, a faintness to be lamented in the best desires, a slowly progressive ascendancy of the Christian spirit? All this has been necessary for you to feel, dear Sarah, and some remainder of the same discipline may not yet be passed. But maintain patience, continue to apply to the power and mercy of the Almighty, in the name of our Lord, and all will ultimately be well. What a region that will be when there will be no more contest with sin, no more sickness, nor fear, nor sorrow.

Once more, my dear young friend, in time and through eternity, I invoke the Divine benediction on you.

J. FOSTER.

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## VIII.

*February 4th, 1825.*

MY DEAR SARAH,—While your heavenly Father retains you here some lingering moments longer, to accomplish in you and for you the concluding part of his merciful intentions toward you on earth, I cannot be content without conveying to you one short expression more of that most deep and friendly interest which augments as we see you retiring. I wish to have it reposed and cherished in my memory, that so dear a friend may read yet a few more lines from me. And I should feel it an inestimable favour granted to me, if I might contribute, in even the least degree, under the blessing of Him who keeps you in his faithful care, to cheer your spirit in this last stage of its journey and its conflict. All mortal endeavours to aid are felt, by those whose affection would offer them, to be

inexpressibly feeble and inadequate to impart strength and animation to the soul in this season of its final and greatest trial. But the happiness to you, dearest Sarah, and the consolation to your friends, is, that *He* is with you who has all power and goodness to support you, who loves while he afflicts you, and will not desert you one moment, but hold you in his own mighty hand, and bear you safely through.

You are sensible, my ever dear friend, that the painful struggle of life will soon be over. At the end of each of the few past weeks you have been conscious, and your anxiously vigilant domestic friends have plainly perceived, that the few days had effected still another, and another, depression of the force of the vital principle: languishing nature has surrendered, successively, still one point more. You are now touching the very confine between this world and that mysterious one into which your Almighty Father's voice is calling you, into which his angels will rejoice to bear you. Oh, how happy that you are not looking despondingly back, with grief and anguish, to see the world receding, and vainly striving to grasp something by which to retain hold of it! How happy to feel, that the world you are leaving does not raise a distracting and melancholy conflict in your soul by drawing it back from that to which you are advancing. What a felicity, that you can complacently, and without a murmur, without, at least, any thing more than a momentary and natural emotion, resign the world, and youth, and life, with all the sublunary activities of a vigorous and enlarging mind, and all that time appeared to be promising you; and can give your immortal being up to Him who will translate it to a better and happier economy.

But still, my dear Sarah, you feel a disquietude of heart, from not experiencing the *complete* influence of religion in imparting a fulness of consolation, in animating the affections toward God and eternal realities, and raising you to a strong confidence of faith. You are, perhaps, sometimes tempted to doubt whether your prayers to the throne of Heaven have been accepted. Now, it is right that you *should* regret a deficiency of the blessed influence, that you *should* implore that God would lift up upon you, without a

cloud, the light of his countenance, and grant you, at happy intervals at least, to enjoy strong consolation in having fled to the refuge set before you,—*at intervals*, for a malady that so crushes the body will often, unless almost a miracle were wrought, inevitably cast a shade over the mind. A measure of this joy of faith and hope is truly a blessing to be desired and implored, both for your own support, my dear Sarah, and that you may leave a happy testimony for the consolation of your friends. You will please your heavenly Father by praying that he would make it delightfully evident that your prayers have been graciously heard. But, at the same time, do not deprive yourself of the precious consolation which belongs to you, and which is so exceeding needful to you, by mistaking the true *principle* of the assurance of the efficacy of your prayers. The true ground of this assurance is the infallible *certainty* of the Divine promises; that is to say, the *certainty* of the faithfulness of God to perform them to those who truly seek him. Combine this certainty on the part of God, with the *conscious certainty* on your part, my dear friend, that you do sincerely, earnestly, and patiently, continue to entreat Him to fulfil his own gracious words to you, and *this* forms a firm ground for your assurance, *independently of the degree in which he may or may not favour you with the express tokens that he actually does accept your petitions*. If only satisfied of this one thing, namely, that the soul has with real and persevering earnestness, and in the name of Christ, sought the Divine mercy, and implored the final fulfilment of the promises of God, I should feel an entire confidence of the eternal safety of such a spirit, however defective its actual consolations were, and even though it went on to the last hour with a great degree of painful doubt and apprehension. Desirable as it is,—exceedingly so, in your near approach to the mighty change, to enjoy the most sensible and animating manifestation of the Divine favour and acceptance in Jesus Christ, I would still repeat, most cogently, that this is not the *essential* ground for confidence. The *essential* ground still is, the absolute certainty that God will and does accept every one who sincerely seeks him, *whether he grant an animating testimony to the heart that he does so or not*.

And are you not *consciously certain* that you have sought

his mercy with a real and solemn intentness of soul, and that you do so still, and that you shall continue to do so to the last hour? My dearest Sarah, surely your heart bears you witness that this is true. His favour, his love, in life and death, and forever, is that which you are never ceasing to desire and supplicate. You even desire and pray that you may desire and pray for it still more importunately. You *are* beseeching him to fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, to conform you to his image, and to prepare you for his presence. Surely, my ever dear friend, you *can* say that this is the prevailing impulse of your soul; that it is so in those moments when the sufferings which oppress the body are at intervals so remitted as to allow the free action of your mind. Then, be assured, that you have the true and solid ground for confidence. Rest upon it, Sarah; in humble trust commit yourself to the Divine mercy; still, however, not ceasing to pray that your God may impart to you a more animated degree of consolation, more clearly disclose his love, and more powerfully draw your affections toward him. Do not cease to pray for some such happy emotions, in the intervals of your suffering. But still consider, that one part, a difficult part, of your last duty, is devoutly to submit to bear that weariness and often confusion of mind which is the inevitable effect of the distress and sinking of your physical nature. May your Almighty Friend sustain you and prolong your patience under this painful weight!

But, while I write, the thought rises upon me, like the appearance of a vision, how soon you will be passed all those disquietudes and sufferings! A short while, and you will have emerged from the valley of the shadow of death, into the scene of glory and felicity beyond. Go, dearest Sarah; go before, and expect us, that are losing you, ere long to follow you. It will give an added attraction to a better world, to think that you are there.

Once more, my ever dear young friend, in time and through eternity, may the blessing of the Almighty rest on you.

J. F.

## IX.

*Saturday Night.*

I am wishing, my dear Sarah, to add a very few lines merely as a postscript to the letter sent this morning. It was concluded somewhat more briefly than I wished, for fear of being too late for the expected means of conveyance. Reflection suggests that there should have been an observation or two more precisely directed to one particular view of that deficiency of consolation which has so much shaded and disquieted your spirit. Your expressions to me, and the observations made by your affectionate relatives, appear to convey that the chief point of your dissatisfaction is *this*—that your efforts and prayers have had but a partial success towards subduing and expelling what your conscience condemns in the habit of your mind, and in its occasional emotions and excitements. You are discouraged by feeling so much irritability accompanying the aggravated pressure of your disease, and by the consciousness of too little warmth of the religious affections, too little of the devotional sentiment toward the object worthy of infinite love, too little of the going forth of the soul in the lively apprehension, by faith, of invisible realities.

Now, my dear Sarah, supposing all this to be the fact, even to the utmost degree that you at any moment painfully apprehend, there is still but one and the same resource—an *application to the infinite mercy and power of God*. All this, being just so much manifestation to you of what you cannot effect by your own will and strength, becomes but the more urgent a motive to persist in unremitted entreaty for both pardoning and sanctifying grace from Heaven. The conscious *continuance* of the evil but imposes a still more resolved and earnest perseverance in application to the renewing and transforming Spirit; and it is a trial of your faith in the all-sufficiency, the willingness, and the fidelity to promises, of that blessed Power. May that faith be sustained in strength to animate your application to God for his gracious influences upon you, even to the last hour that you shall remain on this side that glorious kingdom where faith is changed to sight.

My dear friend, in attempting to suggest consolatory

thoughts, I would by no means adopt a language which should seem to *make light* of those conscious deficiencies of the due operation of religion on your mind, which have caused you so much pain, and sometimes cast a gloom over your hopes. But as to one of these—I mean the tendency to *irritable feelings*—I cannot but be fully of the opinion of your domestic friends, that you suffer it to distress your conscience very greatly too much. Not that you should consider it as *no* evil, or not an evil to be endeavoured and prayed against, but it is an evil so *essentially physical*, it arises so immediately and almost wholly from the morbid, exhausted, and harassed state of your body, that assuredly you may safely regard it as a comparatively very small matter of accountableness to your conscience and your merciful Judge, who knows and compassionates our frame, and remembers that, as to our mortal nature, we are but dust. I am persuaded that the most exalted piety would in such a physical state be no security against, not only the *tendency* to such feelings, but their actual excitement and recurrence in a considerable degree. Such piety will strive against them, will regret them when they have prevailed, but cannot constitute an exemption from a mighty law of our feeble nature, which makes the soul so much a partaker and victim of the sufferings of the body. The imperfect power, or rather the experienced impracticability, of repressing these irritations, with which the oppressed frame affects the mind, is a much less serious evil, and far less to be regretted, than a great deficiency of those feelings which are the great essential elements of internal religion—love to God, an earnest, grateful direction of the soul to Jesus Christ as the beneficent Saviour, the only medium of pardon and acceptance, and a solemn stretching forth of the thoughts and affections to the grand interest and scenes of the eternal world. Whatever defect you have been sensible of in these grand primary principles you will most justly have lamented, and may still regard with much deeper regret than that occasional irritable temperament which is mainly attributable to mere physical disorder, and which, my dear Sarah, you have, to all of us, appeared to regard with a greatly *disproportionate* measure of self-condemnation. The solicitous desire of your pious relatives

has been that you might less expend your regrets on this, and feel them more directed to the imperfection which you were sensible of in the *greater* points of the Christian character.

So long, my dear friend, as you continue a subject of mortality, and of the discipline of your heavenly Father to prepare you to leave it, let your *chief* solicitude, and most importunate prayer, be directed to the object of attaining, through the agency of the Almighty Spirit, more of the love of God shed abroad in your heart, a more affecting sense of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, a more full and cordial reliance on the efficacy of the Saviour's mediation, and a more commanding impression on your mind of those stupendous realities which you are so very nearly approaching to behold. Oh, how striking to think, dearest Sarah, what a very, very short time hence you will be in the midst of their unveiled magnificence, and inspired, I trust, with heavenly rapture to find yourself there!

While you regret, and justly, every conscious deficiency of the great essential affections of religion, and the painful slowness of your advancement in them, you have still no cause to be discouraged. The *VITAL* principle of safety and hope is, that you *WOULD* be all that God approves; that you deplore every conscious deficiency in your soul; that you continue to supplicate the favour, the help, the blessed influences, of the God of all grace; that you strive to cast your soul wholly on the merits of Christ; that you desire and pray to be conformed to the Divine image; that you earnestly long for all that constitutes a preparation for eternity! Who, my dear Sarah, could have wrought all this in you but God? And he is certain to perfect his own work. But consider, that it is *never perfected on earth*; you are not to expect that it will. To the very last we are sinners, who have nothing to rely upon but the Divine mercy alone. Do not think of *making yourself worthy of that mercy in order to be entitled to rely upon it*, and appropriate its consolations. With every imperfection, with every mortifying conviction of your inability to subdue your whole soul to God, *give it him as it is*. He will accept it, will train it to the last point of his own wise discipline, will ensure its having, in this introductory stage, the *essential*

principle of its fitness for his presence, and *in* that presence will exalt and refine it to the perfection of purity and joy. Once again, my ever dear young friend,—my friend in time and through eternity—I commend you to his infinite power and mercy.

J. F.



**THREE LETTERS**  
**ON THE**  
**ESTABLISHED CHURCH AND DISSENT.**

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**THE FIRST ADDRESSED TO**  
**JOSEPH COTTLE, ESQ.**

**THE SECOND AND THIRD TO**  
**THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.**



# THREE LETTERS

ON THE

## ESTABLISHED CHURCH AND DISSENT.

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### I. TO JOSEPH COTTLE, ESQ.,

[In answer to a letter animadverting on his language respecting the  
Established Church.]\*

March, 1830.

MY DEAR SIR,—Allow me to beg you, first to accept my most sincere thanks for the kind spirit and intention of your letter; and next, to take in perfect good part a few sentences, which respect for my excellent friend, and (perhaps I may think) justice to myself, may seem to require of me. I remember the conversation to which you refer, and remember too, that I was stimulated to a certain something

\* *Bristol, March, 1830.*

MY DEAR SIR,—To renew the subject on which we lately conversed, and had the misfortune amicably to differ; namely, the *church of England*. It would be inconsistent in me, as a Dissenter, not to admit, that our religious services are more conformable with the primitive church than the Establishment; but the liberty of private judgment which we exact from others, we must also grant. I dislike intolerance, in whatever form it displays itself. There are wise and holy men who deem the church of England the concentration of excellence. On the contrary, I take it to be, not a “milk-white hind,” but Dryden’s “spotted panther,” yet still a section of the “true church.” . . .

Will you allow one of equal years, but very inferior pretensions, to suggest for your calm consideration, whether you do not extend your strictures on the church, sometimes, rather too far? I am no advocate for frippery and *popish* decorations, and ordinances; immense revenues to cronism bishops, while the inferior clergy are often worse paid than mechanics, although they are in general as well educated, and possess

like vehemence, which I soon afterwards became sensible was considerably out of place, for that I had been under the influence of an essential mistake. I was assuming (having never been apprised of the contrary) that my friend was really a Dissenter on principle, . . . and therefore I was struck with, what appeared to me, a very great *inconsistency*

tastes as refined, as their diocesans. Pluralities, also, I am willing to allow, are carried to an unjustifiable extent, to the great prejudice of meritorious curates. And I must, in justification of myself, as a nonconformist, express, among other things, a decided objection to the burial service; to that part of the church catechism, where the sprinkling of a few drops of water, perhaps by an irreligious clergyman, converts, as it is supposed, the recipient into a "member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." This baptismal regeneration is not more opposed to scripture than it is to common sense. Apostolic succession, also, is regarded even by some dignitaries of the church, with as much disfavour as it is by myself. But all this, and more, may be admitted without *inveective*, in which there is no argument. Excuse me in saying, I do think you err in this respect. Are we not Christians? and must we not exhibit the mind of Christ, who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again," and by which spirit his disciples are to be distinguished? . . .

You seem to consider the Establishment as combined with unmitigated evil. I, on the contrary, regard it, with all its faults (by which I shall certainly please *neither party*), as productive of a great preponderance of good; nor, on the whole, do I ever desire to see the day when there shall be *no Establishment*; or rather an establishment of *Independents, Methodists, or Baptists*. Neither of them would bear their faculties more meekly than the present hierarchy. Scholars and gentlemen, as the generality of clergymen are, although many of them may not have attained to a knowledge of the truth, in its highest sense, they still soften the charities of life, and being scattered through the thinly-peopled districts, convey a knowledge of Christianity, often by their sermons, but always by their prayers, where, otherwise, it is to be feared, there would be heathenish darkness; so that in the present condition of society, I cannot but regard the church as producing more good than harm. With these views, it is always painful to my mind to hear harsh and indiscriminate reflections passed on the Establishment. It is engrafted in my very nature, not to do unnecessary violence to the feelings, and even prejudices, of any man. The same bias of mind makes me restrain severe animadversions on all bodies of men, as well as on individuals, where silence does not compromise conscience. You have known me for more than a quarter of a century, and did you ever hear me speak censoriously either of an individual, or a body of men?

. . . The injunctions, to "love each other with a pure heart fervently;" to "speak evil of no man;" are not the mere garnish of religion, but were designed to enter into the substance of our creed, and become the germinating principle of our lives.

I am sure you must admit that every vicinity offers abundant scope for energies a thousand times more potent than any we can command, in dis-

in hearing your language respecting the Established Church. I was not fully made aware of my error till near the end of the dialogue, when you avowed your wish for the permanence of that establishment.

Now I mean no disrespect to that class of the community (many among them excellent Christians) who are Dissenters only as a matter of habit, from the accidents of association, locality, preference for a certain mode of preaching, &c., &c. I mean no disrespect, when I say that this is not at all what has been always understood by dissent, as *a matter of systematic principle*. Dissent, as argued and practised by the whole school of our most venerated teachers and examples, has been founded on the plain principle, that making religion a part of the state, is anti-christian in theory, and noxious in practice. With consenting voice they would have denied any one to be a Dissenter who did not hold this doctrine, and desire, in obvious consistency, the abolition of all secular religious establishments. Latterly, all this seems to have been forgotten,—very much from the want of instruction, and consequent want of thought, about the real nature and reason of dissent. But I am of the old school,—at the same time, not caring very much how little the people understand about the theory of the matter, *provided religion and practical dissent be making progress*.

The fundamental principle of dissent is, that the religion of Christ ought to be left to make its way among mankind in the greatest possible simplicity, by its own truth and excellence; and through the labours of sincere and pious advocates, under the presiding care of its great Author;

countenancing vice, and fostering all the channels of benevolence; why therefore should Christians dissipate *those* energies in detracting from each other, which should be reserved for more legitimate objects! . . .

Pray excuse any stray expression which may appear defective in respect, and believe me to remain,

My dear Sir, most truly yours,  
JOSEPH COTTE.

P.S. . . . The largest and best part of nonconformists desire, I doubt not, to live on friendly terms with Episcopalians, and willingly concede to them what they so zealously require for themselves—the exercise of private judgment, being quite satisfied, if they behold in them a resemblance to their Divine Lord, which can alone comport with universal holiness. This forms the *true* bond of union.

and that it cannot, without fatal injury to that pure simplicity, that character of being a "kingdom not of this world," be taken into the schemes and political arrangements of monarchs and statesmen, and implicated inseparably with all the secular interests, intrigues, and passions. It is self-evident it must thus become a sharer in state-corruptions, an engine of state acted on, and in its turn acting with, every bad influence belonging so almost universally to courts, governments, and ambitious parties of worldly men. It might beforehand be pronounced infallibly that this unhallowed combination must result in the debasement of religion, and in mischief to the best interests of mankind. But, from this presumption *à priori*, turn to the matter of fact, as exhibited through the long course of the Christian era. I have latterly been looking a little into ecclesiastical history, at different periods; and should, from what I have seen there, have acquired, had it been possible, an augmented intensity of detestation of hierarchies and secular establishments of religion. There is the whole vast and direful plague of the *popish hierarchy*. But placing that out of view, look at *our own protestant establishment*. What was its spirit and influence during the long period of the sufferings of the Puritans? What was its spirit even in the time of Queen Anne? Then follow it down through a subsequent century. *What did it do for the people of England?* There was one wide settled Egyptian darkness; the blind leading the blind, all but *universally*; an utter estrangement from genuine Christianity; 10,000 Christian ministers misleading the people in respect to religious notions, and a *vast* proportion of them setting a bad practical example. When at length something of the true light began to dawn,—when Whitefield and Wesley came forth,—who were their most virulent opposers, even instigating and abetting the miserable people to riot, fury, and violence against them? *The established clergy*. At a later time, who were the most constant systematic opposers of an improved education of the common people? *The established clergy*. Who frustrated so lately Brougham's national plan for this object? *The clergy*. Who insisted that *they* should have a monopoly of the power in its management. Who formed the main mass of the opposition to the Bible Society

for so many years? *Did one single Dissenter so act?* No; *the clergy*. Who lately did all they could, by open opposition or low intrigue, to frustrate the valuable project for education in our own city? *The clergy*. Who were the most *generally* hostile to the Catholic emancipation, undeterred by the prospect of prolonged tumult and ultimate civil war, ravage, and desolation in Ireland? *The clergy*. What is, at this very hour, the most fatal and withering blight on the interests and hopes of the Protestant religion in that country? *The Established Church*.\*

In our own less unfortunate country, there are, it is computed, not much less than 15,000 clergymen of the Establishment. Now what proportion of this number do you think probable are men of sincere, serious piety? That it is vastly a *minority* would be acknowledged by such a man as Wilberforce. But from what one has heard and seen in very many places in England, I think *one in four* would be an *ultra* charitable conjecture; indeed a quite improbable conjecture. What is the *staple* doctrine received by the people from three-fourths (probably more) of their spiritual guides (of the church)? It is that *good works*, and a very limited sort and proportion of them, will secure their future happiness. How many thousands of these teachers are denouncing as fanaticism and delusion, the very principles which you and I account of the *very essence* of the religion of Christ! Two of the latest informants I have met with respecting the state of the Church, in two widely asunder places, describe, that in one of those places the clergy are almost constantly declaiming from the pulpit against *Methodism*; that in the other, the clergy (including several justices of the peace)

\* "It is in vain to deny, that the Church of England clergy have politically been a party in the country, from Elizabeth's time downwards, and a party opposed to the cause which, in the main, has been the cause of improvement. There have been at all times noble individual exceptions; in the reign of George the Second, and in the early part of George the Third's reign, for instance, the spirit of the body has been temperate and conciliatory; but in Charles the First and Second's reign, and in the period following the Revolution, they deserved so ill of their country, that the Dissenters have at no time deserved worse; and therefore it will not do for the church party to identify themselves with the nation, which they are not, nor with the constitution, which they did their best to hinder from ever coming into existence."—DR. ARNOLD, *Life and Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 418, 3rd edit.

are remonstrating against a too precise regard to the sabbath, one of them (at a place which I know) encouraging the boys and young fellows to play at various games just in front of his house, on the Sunday. And yet this clergyman-justice is a respectable moral man. This slight series of notices affords but a faint and meagre hint of the large and awful indictment against the Established Church. And that indictment is, by the whole school of the able advocates of *dissent on principle*, charged in this form; namely, that such are the *natural effects* of a *secular church establishment*,—*not accidental evils of an institution fundamentally good*. And this should, I think, be as evident as any possible instance of cause and effect. Consider, what is *the patronage* of the church? For one large portion, it is in the hands of the *state*, of the ministry—men most commonly ignorant and careless of religion, and only consulting secular and political interests. It is in the private hands of great lords, and great squires, of colleges and corporations. No small proportion of it is a matter of direct traffic in the market, like farms or any other commodity. So many thousand pounds for a “*cure of souls!*” Consider, again, that young men (a vast majority of those who enter the church) enter as on a profession or trade, and a thing which places them on a genteel footing in society. The church is the grand receptacle, too, for secondary branches of the upper sort of families. Many latterly are from the army and navy. Consider, that personal piety is not, nor by the nature of the institution can be, any indispensable prerequisite. Who or what is there to require any such thing, or to judge of any such thing? The candidate passes through a few formalities, and it is done. And if the parishioners receive a man who is most evidently destitute of any such qualification—receive him as their instructor, consoler, and example—they have no remedy. They must be content; they cannot remove him; and the church, and *even the evangelical clergy*, censure them if they presume to go to hear instead a pious and sensible preacher in a meeting-house in their neighbourhood. We affirm, then, that this fearful mass and variety of evils consistently, and for the main part necessarily, result from the very nature of an established church; and are not accidental and separable; and



that therefore the thing is radically and fundamentally bad, and pernicious to religion. If one hears talk of *correcting* it, making it a good thing by "*reform*,"\* one instantly says, *How* correct it? Can you make kings, ministers of state, lord chancellors, to become pious and evangelical men? Can you *convert* the whole set of patrons—lords, baronets, squires, corporations? Can you work such a miracle in Oxford and Cambridge, that they shall fit out no young gents for the church, but such as give proofs of personal piety; or make the bishops such overseers that they shall

\* The church reform in this country too, is to be a marvellous fine thing, it seems. As an *economical* thing, a trade and money concern, it may be plentifully mended, if the axe and saw, and carpenter's rule, be resolutely applied (which I do not expect); but as an *ecclesiastical* institution, an institution for *religion*, it is not worth reforming; indeed cannot be reformed. Think of making the clergy—such a clergy as the reforming project declares them to be;—think of making them pious, zealous, spiritual, apostolic, *by act of parliament*! There is, for example, the scandalous amount of non-residence; this is to be corrected with a strong hand; the clergy shall be compelled to reside;—WHAT clergy shall be so compelled? why, the very men whose non-residence proves they do not care about the spiritual welfare of the people; but only force these same men, by a law, sadly against their will, as the very terms imply, *and then they will instantly become pious, faithful, affectionate pastors,—an unspeakable blessing to the people of every parish*! They will apply themselves, with the utmost alacrity and assiduity, to their preaching, praying, visiting the sick, &c., at the very time that they are grumbling and cursing at not being any longer allowed to promenade about Brighton or Cheltenham. This most ridiculous absurdity comes of that one grand corruption of Christianity—the *state* pretending to make religious churches and Christian teachers. Of religion itself, in its own proper essence, as a personal thing, infinitely foreign to all that legislatures can enact or do, these people seem not to have the slightest idea. To think of some ten or eleven hundred senators (Lords and Commons), sapiently deliberating on the clauses of a bill for making, *by force of said bill*, the clergy and the people pious, spiritual, conscientious!!—and all, but a scantling of them, really thinking that this manufacture can be effected just like any other production of a mechanical machinery! As a mere matter of political economy, as a more equitable distribution of emolument, as a more commodious adjustment of the support of the system, as an affair of decorum and better regulation in the habits of the clergy,—in *this* view of the business something *may* be done, and it may be well worth doing. In *this* business, therefore, let the parliamentary carpenters work away; but, alas for their intellects, if they imagine that they are *creating religion* in clergy or laity; they will only be putting the institution in a little more respectable trim, for awaiting that final demolition which is coming on all state-religious establishments.—*Mr. Foster to Sir J. Easthope, Feb. 8, 1833.*

allow none to go into the fold but such as bear the evident qualifications for the shepherds of the flock? Can you secure that, when advowsons are advertised for sale, none but religious men shall buy or bid for them? Even if all this were not essentially and flagrantly impossible,—if it *might* be brought about *some time*,—I would say, How long, meanwhile, are the people, myriads and millions of them, to be left to be misled in the most momentous of their interests by multitudes of authorized teachers, who teach them not the gospel? How many of these multitudes and myriads can we contentedly resign to live and die under the delusion, that a little middling morality (honesty chiefly), with the aid of the Christianizing sprinkle of water, the confirmation, and the talismanic sacrament at last, will carry them to heaven? There is, besides, something strange, and rather ludicrous, in the notion of *correcting*, what is itself appointed to be, and assumes to be, the *grand corrector*. There is a class of persons highly authorized, ordained, and officially appointed, to instruct, illuminate, and reform the community; the community, wiser than their teachers, are to pity them, instruct them, get them reformed, and *then go to them* for “instruction and correction in righteousness!” A curious round-about process, even if it were practicable.

Now, my dear sir, all this being so, (and how feeble a representation of the state of the case!) it is, I confess, with amazement that I hear you say, while still professing yourself a dissenter—that you desire the permanence of our Church Establishment, so that if its standing or falling depended on your will, you would fix it to stand. What! pronounce for the permanence of an institution, which is at this very day, by an *immense majority* of its ministers, teaching the people (the little that it *does* teach) such doctrine as, if you were to hear it at Broadmead, you would earnestly protest against, as contrary to the New Testament, and fatally pernicious to the souls of the hearers, if they believed it! What! pronounce for the continuance of a most awful mischief to the best interests, on the calculation that perhaps in some future age (when? when? when?) there may be a reversal of those causes which render the institution what it is; when statesmen shall be pious Christians,

and colleges, wealthy patrons, and bishops, shall acquire the spirit of Christ and his apostles!

But it will be alleged, there is a very material reformation already; there are many evangelical, and in all respects, excellent ministers in the church. This is true; at the same time, a place like Bristol is no fair specimen of the whole state of the church through the nation; in many grand portions of which such clergymen are scattered few and rare. There *are some* religious patrons, and latterly a few truly religious ecclesiastics have attained the bench;—as the brothers —, in consequence of one of them having been highly approved as tutor in the family of —, and —, from the accident of having a brother in the ministry; which brother —, as I heard Hughes tell, had a violent contest with his colleagues for the point, and threatened to desert them if they did not yield it.

But now, these genuine Christian ministers in the church;—I dare, in the first place, put the case respecting them in a much stronger shape than I shall, or need, abide by. In speaking of other kinds of institutions, if it were shown that though there is a considerable measure of good in it, yet there is, and in all reasonable probability is likely to be for an indefinite time to come, *more harm than good*, we should not hesitate to say it had better be abolished, even at the cost of losing that good. Now, this is the case of the church. While a considerable number are teaching the doctrines, and in the true spirit of the doctrines which you yourself regard as the very vitality of the Christian religion, an immensely greater number are teaching in a way that *disavows those doctrines*—teaching a doctrine which in very many cases *expressly* contradicts and explodes them, and in others, does virtually and in effect the same thing; satisfying the minds of the believing hearers with what is much more accordant to the corrupt mind, and betrays to a fatal consequence. It is a melancholy thing to be striking a balance upon; but have we not here a plain case of more evil than good? The inference is obvious, according to any rules we think it rational to judge by in other cases. As to any pleading that though the *ministers* do *not* teach the evangelical truth the *prayers* do, I am sure the allegation is utterly futile. From a vast number of observations, and the statements of

numerous deponents who have had much larger experience, I am certain the form of prayer is utterly unavailing to impart, even in the faintest degree, the evangelical sentiments, the mere notions, I mean, when the ministry is of a contrary tenor. Even *H. More* once owned this to *Lowell*, and professed to wonder at it. But there is no need to put the case thus. I revert to what I said in the debate with you; that is, "*Would the downfall of the Establishment be the loss, the silencing, of the truly religious ministers?*" What! would they not take the trouble to preach to the people, if the church, as a mere national and government institution, were abolished? Is that all they care about religion and the people's welfare after all? If it be, they are enjoying vastly more credit than they deserve. As to their support, not a few of them are men of property; and for the rest, the much greater-number of course—how are the *dissenting* ministers supported? The church property, besides, being in the supposed case applied to the national service, would greatly alleviate, on the general scale, the difficulties of support. If it were alleged that, in their capacity of *ministers* of the *national establishment* they have a certain character of *authority* in the people's apprehension, which contributes to add weight to their ministrations, beyond what they would have as mere *Christian* ministers, I should answer, that this is a true but unlucky argument; for that this circumstance *equally* gives weight and authority with the people to those who are *not* teaching genuine Christianity—who are the far greater number.

Well then, supposing the church as a secular establishment to be suddenly prostrate in ruins, what is the consequence? First, we have all the truly evangelical, pious, and zealous ministers *still preaching*, and many of them much more widely and frequently than at present they *can or dare do*: and next, we have the instant relinquishment and silence of the many thousands of clergymen who care nothing about the ministry, but as a profession or trade. Now, my dear sir, do answer it to yourself, with unprejudiced simplicity, whether this would not be a most important advantage gained to the cause of religion. Answer this in honest candour.

It is true, there would at first be a strange confusion, in

consequence of the vacating of so many ill-occupied pulpits. But this would fast abate. If the people really cared about attendance at church, they would be sure to have the scriptures and prayers read (the only good thing they had before), and any respectable reader could do this. For another thing, the truly valuable ex-ministers could and would very greatly extend, and multiply, and diversify their labours. A number of the *most respectable* of the *non-evangelical* clergymen would be disposed to continue their services till gradually replaced by something better. And there would be a great and rapid increase of the number of that secondary and uncanonical kind of preachers, who are already doing such ample good over the country.

You plead hard for liberal and brotherly *union* with the good men in the church. Is it possible you are unaware that nine in ten, perhaps a much greater proportion of the evangelical clergymen, would do any thing sooner than second your motion? Is it not a matter of the most common observation and notoriety that they, in general, affect an *ultra* high-churchism (from a most cowardly motive) and recoil from any friendly contact with dissenters? The Bible Society is almost the only thing in which they have been willing to come into any thing like temporary amicable communication; and that has very generally been done in a manner to imply *condescension*; and for doing so, they have received from dissenters a sad quantity of fulsome and sycophantic adulation. . . .

It is a valuable circumstance of alteration that there is so considerable a number of serious ministers latterly in the church. My idea is, that the Divine Being is determined that a corrupt institution shall be compelled, spite of itself, to do some good before its fall. That it is in no small progress towards its fall, I take to be a matter of obvious calculation. If the progress of (*practical*) dissent shall continue in the same *ratio* as during the last twenty years, the church will, in no very long course of years, be left in such a minority of numbers, and therefore weight and importance, in the community, that the *state* will begin to think how far it may be worth supporting. That it is coming in peril is sounded from *both* sides of the hierarchy. The zealous evangelical clergyman, *Acaster*, in the recent

publication which has made considerable noise, in earnestly urging a grand reform, has asserted that unless the church shall be *very greatly* changed from its present inefficiency and corruption, it will in twenty years more be annihilated. And who is to reform it? Such men as the Duke of Wellington and the archbishops? That it *is* mended in the degree we have lived to see, is virtually owing to the dissenters. That it has been compelled to abate its persecuting spirit and policy, is owing to the vastly improved intelligence of the age,—an effect which, from the same cause, has taken place in some parts of the *Popish* world—as in France.

. . . . The dissenters' system (as far as they can have any thing that can be so named) is simply to teach and preach religion to such as choose to be taught, forming voluntary societies, and in all ways and senses supporting themselves, in point of expenses and everything else. . . . It is the very manner in which Christianity was originally propagated in the world. How else should or can it be propagated? It is an *immensely* different thing to have a secular establishment, shaped, richly endowed, and supported by the state—a profane and profligate king acknowledged as head of this church, a power in the government (often a most irreligious set of men) to decree the doctrines and observances of religion—a set of wealthy and lordly archbishops and bishops—the institution constantly made an engine of state—furnished with a clergy to whom personal religion is no prerequisite, and many of them signing articles which they do not believe—constituted in a way to produce ambition, sycophancy to power, and arrogance towards the people—to say not a word of the vast and horrid history of persecution, the *principle* of which is *inherent* in such an invention, and which has made the hierarchy about the blackest spectacle in the retrospect of the Christian era. How easily we can set out of view this *inherent tendency* of an established hierarchy, when we live in times and in a country where knowledge, and the theory and spirit of freedom (together with the absolute *necessity* imposed on the church of being moderate toward so very large a division of the community), have wearied this persecuting spirit into abeyance and comparative quietness!

Allow me to observe, that *in the company of church people*, I avoid, in mere civility, such expressions as you have criticised: in your friendly society, there can rarely occur any particular occasion for using them. But in the little companies of *absolute* dissenters that one now and then falls into, one should feel it very strange to be under a law inhibiting the very strongest expressions to be applied to an institution from which *what do we dissent for*, but *because* we judge it anti-christian, unscriptural, and corrupt?

I remain, my dear sir, yours,

With the most cordial and friendly regard,

J. FOSTER.

P.S. It is a remarkable sentence which has been recently quoted in more than one publication, from that determined supporter of church bigotry and state despotism, Lord Clarendon, "That of all classes of men he had ever had to do with, the *clergy* were the most narrow-minded in their mode of judging of affairs."

*We* can testify, that up to this hour they are, as a body (unless perhaps the *lawyers* may be their rivals in this quality), of all classes of men the most obstinately averse to every sort of public improvement, when any thing that they can call *innovation* is the condition of it. It is probable that all the argument and eloquence in the nation would not avail to persuade the predominant portion of our clergy to consent to an omission or alteration, of here and there a palpably exceptionable expression in the liturgy; as for instance, that which affirms over the graves of the most wicked men the certainty of a *happy resurrection*; or that, by which the Almighty is informed (what he could not otherwise know) that George IV. is a "*most religious king*;" not to mention that which precisely and unequivocally declares that an infant, under the act of throwing a few drops of water in its face, is *made a Christian*. As to this last, what wretched and dishonest quibbling there has been to form some other meaning to expressions of which the sense is as clear as day-light!\*

\* "I . . . would appeal to any man of common understanding, from the most unlettered peasant to the ablest in the land; or to any jury of twelve honest men, be they Dissenters or be they Romanists; or the first

## II. TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

[The Established Church and the Voluntary Principle.]

October 2, 1834.

SIR,—As a quiet observer of the agitation of the public mind on the subject of the Established Church, and in respect especially to the predicted consequences of its supposed downfall, I hear and see a confident utterance of notions and prognostications which cause me some degree of wonder, and no small degree of perplexity. By the downfall of the Establishment, I mean not any thing so undefined as that for which some of the dissenters have petitioned, and which a certain small portion of the clergy are understood to desire; without having precisely explained, or perhaps even distinctly conceived, the intended import of their phrase, "Separation of the Church and State;" but plainly a discontinuance, a dissolution of the church as a national institution, by an abrogation of all peculiar privileges of the clergy, and a transfer of the temporal property of the church to the general service of the nation; thus leaving the whole weight of the public ministration of religion to subside and rest upon what has come to be denominated the voluntary principle.

I am given to understand (that is, if I can or could) that twelve one might meet in the streets of London, and submit to their judgment, whether it is possible for a doctrine to be couched in plainer or more positive words; whether there can be the shadow of a doubt that the Church of England holds the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; whether the denial of baptismal regeneration be not as clearly contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England as the maintenance of transubstantiation, or the Pope's supremacy; and whether it is not one of the most astounding facts in religious controversy, that ministers of the Church of England should, Sunday after Sunday, use this service, should baptize infants brought to them, and then call on the congregation to join with them in thanking God, for that it hath pleased him to regenerate each child, and yet hold the opinion, either that the child has not been regenerated at all, or that his regeneration is hypothetical!!—If the maintenance of baptismal regeneration be orthodox, the denier must be heretical, or at least the setter forth of erroneous and strange doctrines. The question is come to a direct issue; the church cannot contain both doctrines, the advocates of one or other must give way."—*The Real Danger of the Church of England.* By the Rev. W. GRESLEY, M.A., *Prebendary of Lichfield*, London, 1846, pp. 19, 27.



such an event would involve an extinction, nearly, of the knowledge and observance of Christianity, followed by the prevalence of an atheistical recklessness and moral barbarism: only somewhat qualified, but not rendered much less noxious, by a blending in some portions of the community a wild fanaticism. Assertions or assumptions to this effect have been repeatedly made in parliament, in speeches elsewhere, and in journals of extensive circulation and influence. These are, it is true, the vaticinations of the ultra class of seers; but many of the advocates of the Establishment are holding a language not very far short of this, in proclaiming the disastrous consequences that would follow on its fall.

In requesting admission for a few sentences of inquisitive comment on this representation, I will decline any reference to the fact so often alleged in argument by the opponents of ecclesiastical establishments, that the Christian religion originally made its way extensively in the world, not only without the patronage of the secular authorities, but in defiance of their enmity and power. Nor will I insist on the question, whether it be consistent with piety and reason to suppose that the Divine Author of Christianity should suffer that one thing, which is transcendently the best on earth, and the object of his peculiar care, to depend for its effective existence on arrangements in the political constitution of a nation; insomuch that, though it have taken deep root in the land, it may be subject to wither to death under an enactment to withdraw from it a certain portion of secular privilege and emolument. Passing by such general considerations, let us see what may be, in this country at this time, the probabilities in favour of religion, supposing it to fall off from its formal junction with the state.

And first, I should like to know, from the foretellers or such fearful consequences of the supposed event, what is their real deliberate estimate, in respect to religion in the community, of the dissenters and their operations. In a survey of the country there are brought in our view several thousand places of public worship, raised at their expense, many of them large, many of the smaller ones under the process, at any given time, of being enlarged, with the addition of many new ones every year. And I believe a majority

of them are attended by congregations which may be described as numerous, in proportion to their dimensions and the population of the neighbourhood. So that if the dissenters be somewhat too sanguine in assuming that their numbers would already be found, on a census of the whole country, fully equal to the attendants of the churches of the Establishment (in most of the great towns they far exceed), there is every probability that their rapid augmentation will very soon bring them to an equality. The Wesleyan Methodists are included; since the church must, in common sense, forego any pretension to claim them—till they will submit their chapels to episcopal consecration, with its consequences—till they deem episcopal ordination indispensable, in substitution for the hierarchical fiat of their Conference, to qualify their preachers—and surrender their whole independent system to be extinguished under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

With respect to the ministers of these several thousand congregations, I do not hear from any quarter a denial that in general they are zealous and diligent in their vocation—in very many instances eminently so. Even the charges so often made against them of fanaticism, enthusiasm, restless proselytizing, bold intrusion, and the like, convey an acknowledgment that they are not lazy in the work. If to the number, combined with the average length, of their weekly public services, be added the consideration that nearly the whole is at the expense of their own mental exertion, it will appear that in the proportion of public exercise they very greatly exceed the generality of the established clergy. And, if I may believe testimony on all hands, in addition to a rather extensive observation, what is it that in substance they press on the attention of the people, under all the diversities of manner, and inequalities or defects of talent and attainment, but the infinite importance of their spiritual and eternal concerns; with an inculcation of those principles of faith and practice which are indispensable to their final safety? thus aiming at what I suppose to be the object of the institution of a Christian ministry.

Notwithstanding their dissent from the church, and their sectarian differences among themselves, I believe it is beyond all dispute that a very great majority of them maintain

a much nearer conformity in doctrine to the articles of the Established Church, excepting the minor, ceremonial, and merely ecclesiastical points, than the majority of its own clergy. I am authorised, also, to assert, with perfect confidence, that there is very rarely in their public ministrations any hostile allusion to the Establishment, or any thing said in praise, or in vindication, of dissent.

In the economy of protestant dissent there is one distinctive fact of high importance, and so nearly universal, that the exception must be very small—the requirement of *personal religion* as essential in the qualifications of a minister; I mean, that he be habitually and seriously intent on the cultivation of piety in his own mind, with a view to his own last account—his own final safety. In so very numerous a class it is inevitable that there will be admitted some false pretenders, and that there will occur too many lapses of human frailty in such as are *not* hypocrites. But these examples when exposed are branded with a peculiar opprobrium, for the very reason that personal piety is in them an avowed and perfectly understood *sine qua non*. They must afford satisfactory cause for the people's *believing* them to be such. I need not ask you whether there be any existing ecclesiastical institution in which evidence of such a qualification is not held indispensable, is not even brought under question, as a requisite to official competence for the consecrated profession.

Not to lengthen this statement till I incur the suspicion of being a partisan, I will but just mention the great, I may soberly say the prodigious, exertions of the dissenters in the promotion of education among the poor—in local plans of charitable visitation and instruction—and in wider and very costly schemes and combinations for the extension of religion both at home and in foreign regions. And is it, or is it not, the genuine Christian religion that they are thus multiplying and extending their activity to promote? Any assertion or doubt set up against the affirmative by the supporters of the church, provided they really believe its authorised doctrines, must fall before the fact, which I re-assert on the most extensive evidence, that by far the greater proportion of the dissenting ministers insist earnestly on what will on all hands be acknowledged the most essential

and distinctive in the theology of that church's articles, understood in their plain, unsophisticated sense, which they admit, while the more numerous proportion of the clergy evade them.

If, further, it should be alleged against those preachers, that many of them are grossly defective in mental cultivation—that, from a deficient education, their preaching, even though it were right in point of doctrine, is illiterate, crude and vulgar, I suspect this opinion is taken up on a very limited and unfortunately directed observation; and at any rate, the dissenters in general are, as I am informed, completely aware of the indispensable necessity of a sound intellectual, and literary discipline to qualify their ministers, and support numerous seminaries for that purpose.

And now, sir, I come to the point I had in view. Seeing that the dissenters perform already so very large a proportion of whatever is done for religion among the people, I ask, in honest simplicity, looking only thus far, how there should be so overwhelming a ruination to the cause of Christianity in the supposed event of the fall of the establishment? Is it in mere temporary competition with the church, and not from any sincere concern for religion itself, or the welfare of the people, that they are prosecuting all these operations, at so immense a cost of labour and pecuniary expense; so that, on condition the church became silent, they would gladly save their toil and money, and surrender the people to ultra paganism—paganism without a God? Instead of remitting their exertions, would they not feel themselves called upon, if possible, to double them? Would any one of their meeting-houses be shut up; or would not, instead, new ones be raised, in hitherto unoccupied districts, with a rapidity even surpassing that which has, of late years, excited the surprise of every one in the habit of extensively traversing the country? Would their congregations forthwith dwindle, as under a pestiferous blast? or would they not rather receive a great accession of attendants, even though it were in virtue solely of that principle or instinct in the human mind, that *something* of the nature of religion is indispensable? And as to the religious and moral *effect* of all this on the people, I confess, that with every wish to be impartial, I cannot but

see the influence of the dissenting ministry on those who attend it, is on the average, at the least, as beneficial as that of the church on its division of attendants.

According, however, to some of our augurs, it is not in prostration and silence that religion would perish on the dissolution of the church; for that event, they tell us, would let loose, like Æolus with his winds, a wild fanaticism, to result in a boundless confusion of all manner of fantastic notions and conflicting sects. But does any sober man believe that the Establishment is actually, at present, of any avail to restrain such lawless elements? over the dissenters it evidently can have no such power; *they* may, for any thing it can do, abuse their freedom into as many sectarian follies as they please; not the most petty heresiarch among them ever thinks of asking its leave. If its articles contribute any thing to keep them right, it is merely on the strength of their supposed intrinsic scriptural authority, which would remain just where it is, though the ecclesiastical institution were abolished; and, let me ask, what power of restraining to an uniformity of doctrine is maintained over even its own members by a church which is suffering within itself an almost mortal schism, in an utter contrariety of opinion on the most important of its doctrines, between the larger portion of its clergy, and that smaller, but increasing one, which is growing so much in favour with the people; not to mention those recent wildest extravagances and novelties of which the church has had a much greater share than all the dissenting sects together?

Thus far, Sir, I find no way out of that "perplexity" which I began by confessing to you. But this is only half my difficulty. I now turn from the dissenters directly to the church itself, in the inquiry after the consequences of its supposed downfall; still meaning by that term its reduction to the equal ground with the other religious parties, of maintaining its ministry by the voluntary support of those who approve it. That event being supposed, what am I to expect would follow? Would the clergy, thereupon, all in a body renounce their vocation? would they, with one consent, refuse to preach? Would they, in word and act, declare that, since the Christian religion is no longer established and endowed as a part of the national constitu-

tion, they care nothing about it; and that, as to the people, they are not worth preaching to? Should we see one church, and another, and another, shut up in solitary gloom; and hear the passing townsman, or villager, or rustic, saying, "Dr. ———, (or Mr. ———,) has told us he has no more to say to us; we may go to what he calls the conventicle, if we like, or, if we like it better, to the ale-house; and the parson is off—we don't know whither?" Am I seriously required to believe the clergy so indifferent to the sacred calling to which they have been "moved by the Holy Ghost," and to the welfare of their flocks? No, it will perhaps be replied, they would be willing and most desirous to continue their ministrations, but how could they be supported when the income was gone? They could not preach and starve. Now I must confess my amazement at hearing such language. Do they ever take one minute's trouble to think how so numerous a dissenting ministry can subsist, in communities who have, besides the expense of building, enlarging, and keeping in repair, their places of worship, with all the additional of schools, &c. &c.? Or have they ever heard of such a thing as the Catholic priesthood of Ireland? The adherents of the church possess the far greater share of the wealth of the nation; they affirm, that they are the vastly preponderant party in every way; they profess a zealous and affectionate attachment to the venerable institution for its *spiritual* excellence; and they have on their side the main strength of the hereditary prejudices of the people. What then are we really to understand, that in spite of all this, a voluntary support of their clergy is a desperate thing to be calculated on or thought of? Is it, when the truth is known, come to this, that the supporters and adherents of the church do not, after all, care enough about religion, or for the Christian services of their clergy, to maintain a Christian ministry in the same manner as the dissenters are doing? Is that an example of pious liberality and zeal far above their imitation? What! come to them for money in support of their religion, and there's an end of it! Sacred in their eyes as is their church, more sacred still are their coffers and their purses! But then is it not extremely remarkable, that the dissenting cause should have found out, and drawn to itself,

extracted, as it were, from the community, just that portion of it which *does* care enough about the matter, which is willing to be at the expense of a Christian ministry; leaving the rest under the imputation, the just imputation, on the above supposition, as far as I, in my simplicity, can see, of setting a lower value on their souls, or, at least, on the means of their instruction and salvation?

I have heard it alleged, that however it might fare with the people in the towns and the districts, thickly inhabited, the rural tracts, with a scanty population, would be left in a total destitution of religious advantages. Did the foretellers of this consequence ever traverse any considerable part of Wales, where they would see an almost endless succession of meeting-houses, in tracts where a few humble-looking habitations, scattered over a wide neighbourhood, give immediate evidence of a thin population and the absence of wealth? And, if I am not much misinformed, such proofs of the productive activity of the "dissenting interest," as it is called, have begun to appear in scores, or rather hundreds, of the thinly-inhabited districts of England; a representation confirmed by the frequent complaints of clergymen in such localities, that their parishes are becoming deformed by such spectacles—"nuisances," in the language of some of them: "schism-shops" is the denomination I have oftenest heard. The means for raising these edifices have been contributed by the liberality of dissenting communities at a distance, for the most part, from the places themselves. And, according to my information, the religious services, in many of them, are kept up gratuitously, in consideration of the poverty of the rural attendants, by the extra labours of ministers in the nearest situations, assisted by zealous and intelligent religious laymen, possessing and cultivating a faculty for public speaking.

Now, after such statements, can I hear without mightily marvelling, that on supposition that the church, as an endowed establishment, were to fall, the whole resources of its present immense community, the combination and co-operation of all their opulence, education, and religious zeal—their myriad of accomplished clergymen's (not a few of them, by-the-bye, men of independent property) ascendancy

in many ways over the minds of the people—and their possession of all the churches, clear of that incumbrance of debt, which I am told lies heavy on many of the dissenting meeting-houses; that all this together would still leave the church party in hopeless inability and despondence of supporting a Christian ministry in the poorer districts, to save the people from barbarism, practical atheism, or the fanaticism which they think would be nearly as bad?

In my next letter I shall suggest a few considerations, more especially applicable to that party in the church denominated evangelical.

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### III. TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

[The Evangelical Clergy.]

Oct. 3, 1834.

SIR,—In my former letter, the bearing of my observations was directed to the church party, generally and collectively considered, as all concurring in the solemn protest against the supposed change; and I have but slightly noticed a certain distinction and division within that body; the distinction marked by the appropriation to a portion of its clergy and other members, of the epithet *evangelical*, by assumption on the one side, and derisive concession on the other. The number of the clergy so designated I have seen estimated, I think, in some of the publications in their interest, at as many as one-seventh or one-eighth of the whole. They are, for the most part, I am informed, quite as zealous as any of the others for upholding the Establishment, and affected with equal horror at the idea or the omens of its fall. I hope to be pardoned for directing the argument, before I conclude, specially and respectfully to them.

If such a thing could happen as my being in a company of them, on terms that would admit of a reference to the subject without discourtesy, I can imagine myself addressing them to some such effect as the following:—Very greatly, gentlemen, honouring your piety, sincerity, and



diligence, I yet do not assume to be theologian enough to pronounce on the difference of religious faith which marks you off in such prominence and insulation from the great majority of your clerical brethren; but allowing that you may be in the right, I have then to suggest a consideration or two, somewhat *ad hominem*, respecting your anxiety and alarm for the permanence of the Establishment. You say, and I would believe you, that your great concern, for yourselves and the people to whom you minister, is *religion itself*, as an affair between the soul and God, consisting in the knowledge and efficacy of Divine truth; that, as to any ecclesiastical institutions, framed and established by the government of a nation, you value them no otherwise, and no further, than as they are adapted to promote among the people that grand interest, by a pure faithful ministration of religious truth; and that, therefore, your attachment to the existing Establishment is from a deliberate conviction that it is in some way or other so adapted. You will, I doubt not, allow me to add for you, that any such institution which, on a great scale, and during a long tract of time, practically fails of operating effectually to this its great and only purpose, must bring its adaptedness deeply in doubt. Either its constitution must be unsound, or its administration most unfortunate. And if the vice which appears in the administration be but the natural result of the constitution, then the whole contrivance falls under a fatal conviction. Nobody has to learn that every institution, however excellent in theory, is liable, from human folly and depravity, to perversions in its administration. But if the practical working of an institution be generally, predominantly, through successive ages and all the change of times and circumstances, renegade from the primary intention, this would seem to betray that there must be, in the very construction itself essentially, a strong propensity and aptitude to corruption; that a good design has been committed to the action of a wrong machinery for making it effective; that the instrument intended for the use of a good spirit, is found commodiously fitted to the hand of a darker agent.

I am not, you will observe, expressing any opinion on the abstract question of the necessity or possible advan-

tage of a religious establishment, but commenting on the actual Church Establishment of this country. Now, then, I would say to you, with deference, take an impartial view of the English church, through a duration of nearly two centuries, and at the present time. You well know, that, with all its amplitude of powers and means—its many thousands of consecrated teachers, of all degrees—its occupancy of the whole country—its prescriptive hold on the people's veneration—its learning, its emoluments, and its intimate connexion with all that was powerful in the state—it did, through successive generations, leave the bulk of the population, for whose spiritual benefit it was appointed, in the profoundest ignorance of what *you* consider as the only genuine Christianity.

But this is greatly understating the case: for it not only did not teach what you so consider; it taught, and effectually taught, in spite of its creed on paper, what you esteem to be *not* genuine Christianity; what you regard, if I can at all understand the strain of your preaching, as fatal error. Why did it so, if it really *was* adapted to do just the contrary? And this it did in undisturbed continuance, under the sanction of the combined secular and ecclesiastical authority, in whose judgment it did not by all this forfeit its claims. It was held to be a good and inviolable institution, the best model of a Christian church notwithstanding.

Such was, for incomparably the greater part, its administration. Now since all this while it possessed no intrinsic power in its constitution to redeem itself from being thus made an instrument of fatal mischief, you will pardon me for doubting whether that constitution itself was not corrupt.

You gladly retreat from this point of review; and take your stand on the present state of the church, in which you say that a better spirit is at last arising; and therefore you would regard its supposed fall as a dreadful calamity, involving little less than ruin to the cause of religion in the land. By this better spirit, I must understand you to mean that many ministers like yourselves are appearing in the church, who inculcate religion in that form which has fixed on you and them, for praise and opprobrium, the

distinctive epithet *evangelical*. I believe you all insist on the vast importance of exhibiting religion in that form; declaring the doctrines so distinguished to be of the very essence and vitality of Christianity; insomuch that the contradiction or suppression of them radically vitiates a minister's religious teaching. But now let me remind you what a small minority, notwithstanding all the recent accessions, you form of the ministers of the church; and seriously ask you what you can deliberately think of the principle and tendency of an institution under the appointment and sanction of which, perhaps six-sevenths or more of the religious instructors are, as in your judgment they must be, misleading the people in respect to infinitely the most momentous of their concerns. Are you never, in your pulpits, when solemnly enforcing the evangelical principles, intruded upon by the image of the many thousands of congregations listening, at that very hour, to doctrines virtually or avowedly opposite to yours, in churches which they attend in the undoubting confidence that the religious ministration in an institution sanctioned by venerable antiquity and all the authority of the realm, must be right? On retiring, you have to strike the balance between the good and evil effected on the self-same Sunday by the institution which you extol.

You will not accuse me of exaggerating the opposition and alienation under which you stand for your religion's sake, when you think of the various, numberless, and often bitter manifestations of antipathy on the part of the majority; how you are declaimed against as enthusiasts, inflating some of your hearers with spiritual pride, turning others of them gloomy and sometimes mad; how you are described as a mischievous sect within the church, and betraying it; and what controversial labours of the clerical pen there have been to explode your tenets and pretensions. And all this, in spite of your earnest, reiterated declarations of devoted fidelity to the church; declarations sedulously endeavoured to be verified in many instances, as I am told, by a careful avoidance of communication with dissenters, who hold and preach the very doctrines for which you are thus spurned and defamed by your own brethren.

Now, such being the disposition of the far greater part of the church, with regard to what you esteem as exclusively the evangelical and saving faith, what are those consequences which you anticipate with such dismay, on the supposition of its fall? In the first place, as to yourselves, the evangelical party, would you thereupon cease to preach? Surely it may be assumed that instead of abandoning your vocation, you would become even still more zealously intent on prosecuting its grand object; and you would have a much enlarged scope and freedom by the breaking away of canonical restrictions: but how to be supported? I may answer that you say, or it is said by your friends, that your congregations are generally speaking more numerous, more pious, and more personally attached, than in the other portions of the church. Would all their warm feeling shrink into niggardliness? would they betray that, after all, they are only worshippers of Mammon, as soon as there came upon them the duty of contributing to a liberal provision for their valued spiritual instructors? Is this your estimate of their piety and affection—and that, too, while you see what is done under so many disadvantages by the dissenters? Besides, many individuals among you are persons of independent means; and there is no small portion of wealth in that division of the community which separates off from the main body of the church in preference for your ministrations. Will you pardon me if I add, that if the event in question should reduce some of you to a less genteel station and style of life, I do not see why that should be deemed an insupportable affliction, or how it should destroy and neutralize the value of your Christian labours? Probably none of you prosecute those labours with happier effect than some of those who are far enough below a competence for maintaining that style.

In the next place, what are you prepared to say respecting that much greater proportion of persons in the sacred profession, whom you pronounce, both expressly and virtually, to be no true ministers of the gospel, therefore no safe guides of the people to salvation? In so pronouncing, you say they ought never to have been in the profession. But is it not a strange dilemma that for this most valid

reason they ought never to have been in it, and that yet it would be a religious calamity for them to be out of it?

There is no doubt, that when the clerical office should cease to be an endowed profession, great numbers would speedily relinquish it, partly from the withdrawal of the former support and emolument, which in very many cases the congregations would not feel esteem enough to replace by voluntary supplies; partly from the indifference or positive dislike which many of them are known to feel to the religious employment. And you will ask me what is then to become of the spiritual interests of the people? I may answer by pressing home my question—*whatever* become of them, is it for *you* to maintain that it would be a religious calamity for the essentially defective, for the fatally erroneous teachers of Christianity to vacate the pastoral function? You need no description of multitudes of those who have taken it on them; mere men of the world, who have entered the church just as a profession, in the most secular sense of the term, as more convenient or accessible than any other; under no solemn commanding sense of the importance of religion for their own selves, maintaining only a professional decorum of character, and too many of them hardly even that, content with a cold official performance of “duty;” assuring the people of final safety on slender and delusive conditions; many of them little addicted to sacred studies; and some of them, of more intellectual habits, exhibiting the result of their application to theological subjects, in a systematic opposition to the doctrines in assertion of which you are constantly citing the holy Scriptures, and the articles of your church—according to which latter standard at any rate you are certainly in the right.

But I am told that you resort from the pressure of such untoward facts to the evangelical temperament of the *prayers*, which are to impart the genuine sentiments of religion in default or in spite of the sermons. *Have* they this salutary efficacy? If you have been much conversant in those parts of the country (dark regions, you denominate them) where the evangelical doctrines have never been brought through the means of preaching, in the church or by the dissenters, I am, from various experience, certain

you must have found that the Prayer-book has failed to reflect one glimmer of those doctrines, as you understand them, on the minds of the people. I remember that inveterate devotee to the church, Hannah More, acknowledging the fact to be notorious, and expressing her wonder at it. Did you ever know even one instance of a thoughtless irreligious man, or a mere formalist, being awakened, converted (I use your own terms) by means of the bare instrumentality of the prayers?

If you are appalled at the sight of the wide chasm thus supposed or threatened to be made, I am not accountable to answer the question how it is to be filled up. The answer may be fairly required from the consistency of those whose theological principles call aloud for this infraction, while their ecclesiastical ones are as vociferous for the inviolability of an institution which would to be sure instantly go to pieces under such an operation.

If however it will be a consolation, you may be assured there never will be any such sudden downfall of the church, and simultaneous flight or destitution of its ministers. If the dissenters, advancing in the ratio of recent times, shall have risen after a number of years to such a preponderating majority, and the collective nation shall have declined so far from its veneration for the Establishment, that the representative legislature, seeing its preservation no longer valuable on political grounds shall doom it to extinction, even then there would be assigned to the actually occupying clergy an equitable allowance of support during their lives or their necessities. And thus the established ministry will be prolonged, whether for better or for worse; while their continual diminution in the course of nature will gradually bring the people universally to take on themselves the maintenance of whatever belongs to their religion.

But you, even you, with all your sorrow that the Establishment is fatally treacherous to its momentous trust, are still more zealous for its permanence, in the professed hope that the church, which should all this while have been converting the people, may at length be itself converted. Strange idea, methinks! that the institution appointed as the grand rector of the people's judgments on the most important of all subjects, their guardian against error and

all evil principles, should be waiting to be itself rectified by the action of extrinsic causes; that is to say, causes which, having, independently of it and even under its opposition, accomplished a great work which it ought to have effected, shall rectify it in addition. The church shall in time become purely, faithfully, efficaciously evangelical. In what time, and by what means? Obviously, when the divers and strongly-combined authorities which exercise the ascendancy over it shall have first become so. When the heavenly fire shall have descended on the high places of the land—when courts, and statesmen, and the chief ecclesiastical dignitaries, and universities, and title patrons, and opulent proprietors, and traders in advowsons—when these shall have become very generally the spiritual, humble disciples of the school of Christ, then at length the church will attain its evangelical purity. This will, indeed, be coming to its duty rather of the latest. In the comparatively smooth service it will then have on its hands (for the people, too, cannot have remained far behind in such a change), it may calmly rejoice to see already performed, by some extraneous agency, the mighty operation for the achievement of which its own powers and privileges had been conferred; and truly munificent must the nation be, to reward it by a confirmation of those privileges for what it has not done, and has not to do.

But you may say that, as you are promising yourselves a *progressive* evangelization of these authorities ascendant over the religious character of the church, you may fairly calculate on a *contemporary* and at least equal progress in the renovation of the church itself, with a consequent efficacy in corresponding proportion. Be it so; but what will you be thinking all the while of the contrary and counteracting effect of the spiritually dead condition (your own phrase) of the *un-evangelized* portion of the church, which will for a long time, at all events, retain you in the hapless condition of the captives of Mezentius? As to any rapid progress in the hoped for change in the disposition of the chief patronage, it would seem to me that you have little cause to be so sanguine. What, for example, have you to expect from the superior personages in the state, even such of them as are supposed to be not altogether

ignorant or careless of religion? I remember when some of you looked with considerable hope and confidence to that very respectable premier and churchman, the late Lord Liverpool. When, however, after a period of delay and expectation, a representation was conveyed to him by Mr. Wilberforce, complaining that the evangelical clergy were neglected in the dispensation of patronage, he replied that it was on principle that the patronage was so withheld, for that he considered the evangelical party to be doing great mischief in the community.

That you do, notwithstanding all the adverse influences, obtain here and there the introduction of an evangelical minister, in succession to one who was perhaps violently in opposition, may well be very gratifying to you. And indeed this gratification has often so strong an expression, as to afford a significant indication of your own estimate of the state of the church. For it seems to be regarded almost as a God-send, that, under such auspices, there should have come into, or come forth in, the church, yet one more such minister as you say all the thousands of them ought to be.

On such a survey of the ecclesiastical system, I hope you will pardon an old observer for presuming to dissuade you of the evangelical party from joining chorus in the language, which profanely affects to identify the fate of Christianity with the stability or fall of an institution which, by your own declaration, unites the Manichæan principles—but without their equality.

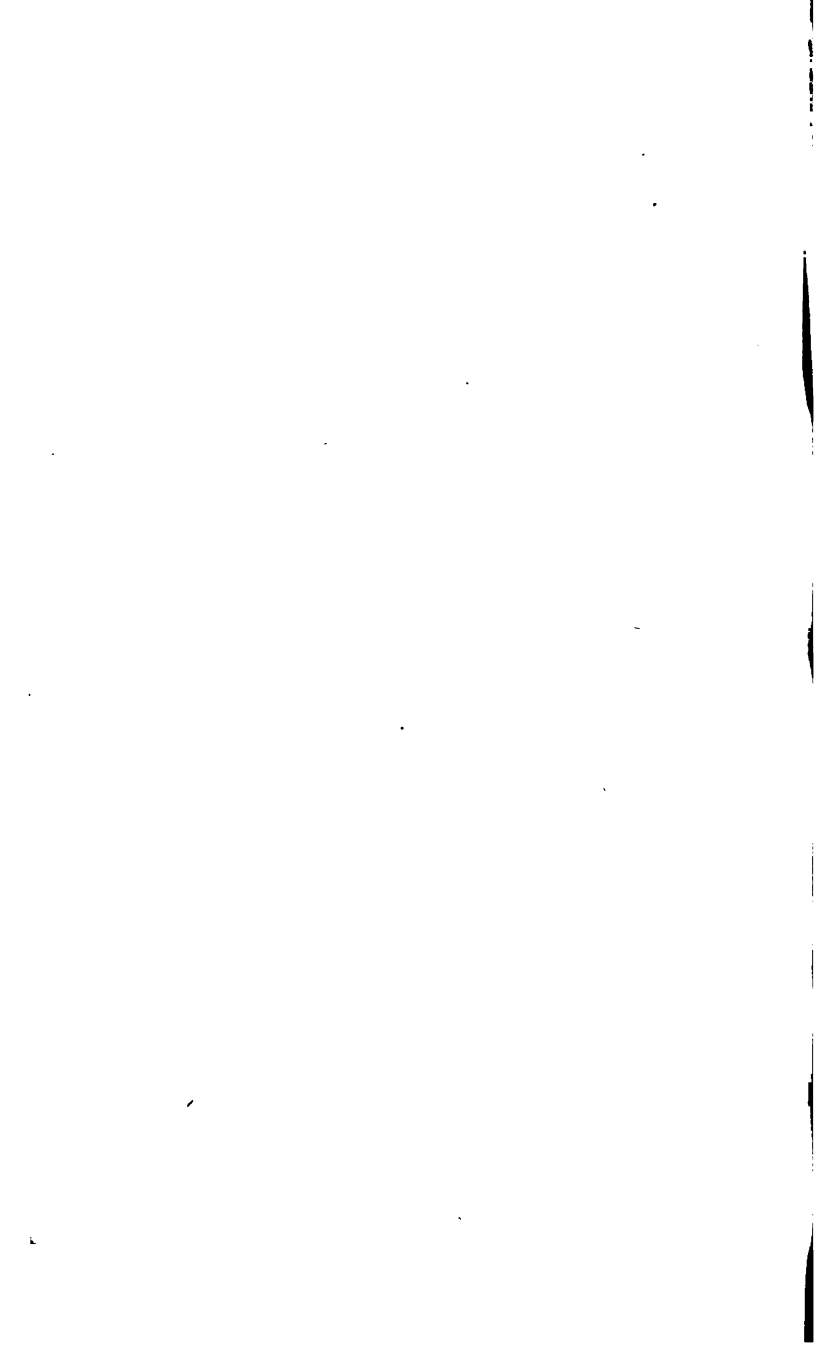
Mr. Editor, I am more ashamed than I can express, to have encroached on your page to so unconscionable a length; and faithfully promise never to obtrude the subject on you again. Yours, &c.

A QUIET LOOKER-ON.\*

\* "Who told you of '*my two letters*'—meaning, I suppose, in the Morning Chronicle. *Whoever* wrote them, I approve them enough to be pleased that you also approve them. The writer would, I dare say, be curious to see by what wriggles the '*evangelicals*' would get out of the corner—out of the cleft-stick. But how strange, that instead of such wriggling, hardly a man of them of any account has the honesty to come manfully out of the corrupt institution. With one or two exceptions, all who *have* of late years come out have left anything they were ever worth behind them."—*Mr. Foster to the Rev. Josiah Hill, Nov. 1, 1834.*



"Some one naming himself '*Philalethes*' has written in the Morning Chronicle against the thing, and threatens another column or two. I have no disposition to say anything to him. He is one of those who have no notion of the business as a matter of *religion—religion by and for itself*; and he makes, as coolly as possible, some monstrous false assumptions of fact in favour of the [Established Church],—assumptions which prove that there is no talking to him to any purpose."—*Mr. Foster to B. Stokes, Esq., Oct. 28, 1834.*

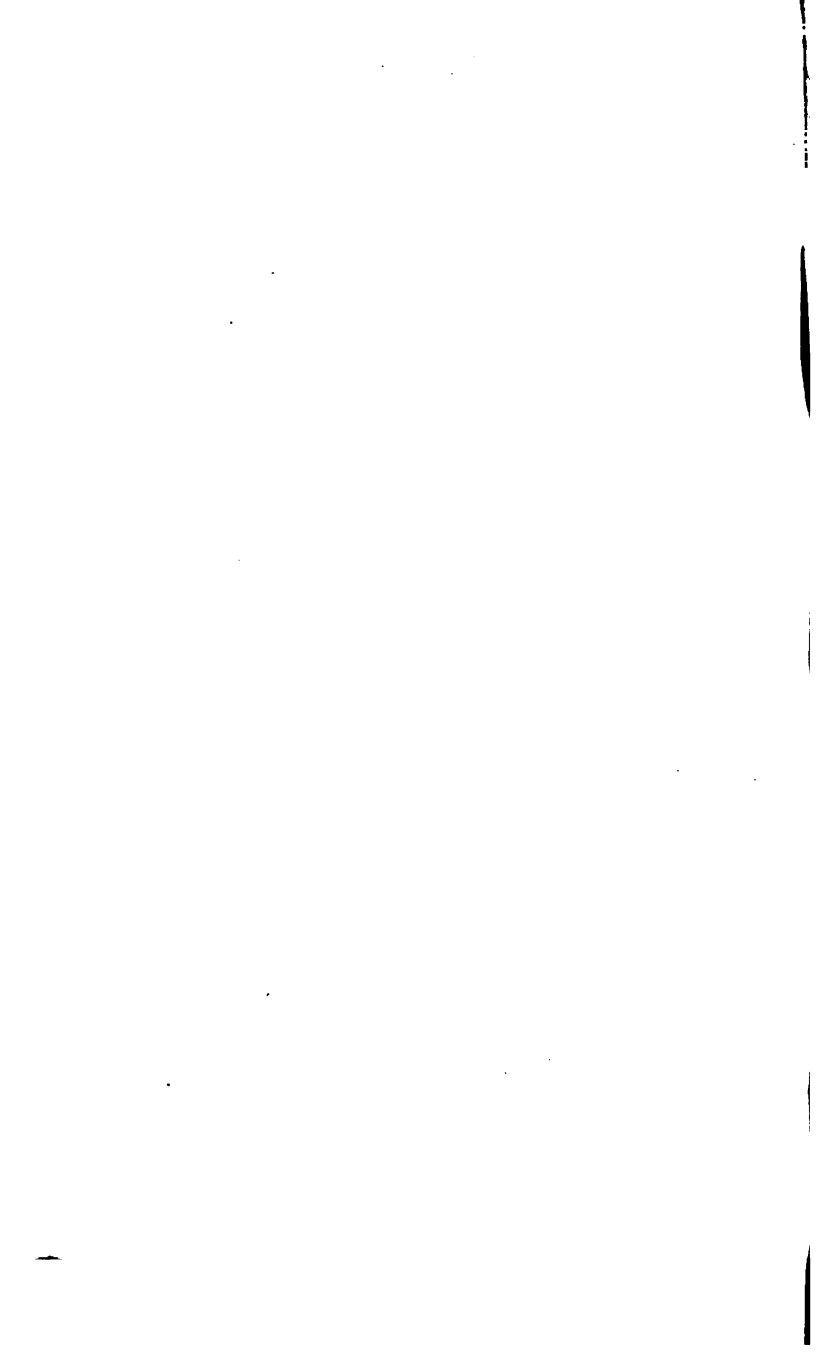


**FIVE LETTERS ON THE BALLOT:**

**ADDRESSED**

**TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE,**

**1835.**



## I.

*April 24, 1835.*

SIR,—In reporting from day to day the progress of the late election, your columns abounded with descriptions and indignant complaints, from all quarters, of the iniquitous management on the part of the anti-popular interest, perverting the suffrage by every expedient of corruption and intimidation; so that your correspondents had to inform you from a hundred places, that it was absolutely impossible to obtain an honest election. One of them from a large city, told you—"The Reform Bill is not worth five farthings here, so inveterate, despotic an ascendancy has the tory corporation, combined with the high-church, acquired over the interests and fears of the inhabitants." You have subsequently, when recounting the causes of the reduction of the reformers in the new parliament, as compared with the preceding, adverted to this wide and flagrant system of iniquity; and affirmed, I believe with truth, that the same bad practices were chargeable in but a small proportion on the reform candidates and their supporters. But I expected you to do something more than this. I reckoned on your taking an occasion to declare, in explicit and emphatic terms, that to whatever extent the nefarious system has been successful in sending members to parliament, to that extent the representation has been falsified, the nation defrauded, and the legislation vitiated. In that proportion the House of Commons is the reverse of what it ostensibly purports to be, and what it ought to be—a real representation of the people. And the corrupt section is not only morally invalid, but criminal: the members who have entered by this dishonourable road, not only have no right to the position they have assumed, but deserve (or their agents deserve) some penal visitation for the proceeding to which they owe their success. Yet, somehow it happens, that when once they have got within the door, and are sworn and seated, they seem to have slipped off the badge of disgrace which clung to them up to the moment before

their entrance; they have signed with the holy water at stepping in, and are become all at once "honourable men." Their right to be there seems to be admitted upon the fact itself that they *are* there. They maintain the same assurance of front, of speech-making, and of voting, as if they were *bond fide* representatives; just as you have sometimes known a man, who has by fraudulent means obtained possession of a property not his own, carry himself nevertheless with the confident air of an honest man. The party, and the leaders of the party, to which these members addict themselves, know very well how their allies were obtained. But what of that? Their votes tell for as much as if the most genuine suffrages of the constituency had sent them to the house; and a minister who is willing to rule by such means (Sir R. Peel for example), would only laugh at you for telling him he has no *moral* right to that part of his support; that in so far the approbation given him is a lie against the community, and that he is availing himself of a flagrant iniquity. It would be deemed a violation of all propriety for a bold, independent member, facing the ranks where these worthies are in array, to declare aloud, before or after a division, that several dozens or scores of those honourable gentlemen ought to be struck out of the vote, or even sent out of the house, on account of the criminal means by which they had entered it—so much does success always extenuate the opprobrium of any turpitude in the manner of obtaining it.

And now, sir, consider what a prodigious, and possibly disastrous effect, such a falsified representation of the country may have on its affairs. Questions of an incalculable importance—we might suppose a question of peace or war, or a competition between opposite systems of policy—might be decided, and decided perniciously to the country by the preponderance given by the votes of those whom nothing but the infamous practices at elections had qualified to vote at all. Or great questions of national interest, which a genuine representation of the people would have decided speedily and conclusively, may be retained or forced back into such a balance of power as to threaten a long continuance of commotion, alternation, and confused or frustrated legislation.

Recollecting the vile means to which the reports in your Journal, during the late election, ascribed in so many instances the success of the anti-reform candidates, I am sure it is your opinion, even after the utmost allowance by way of set-off should be made for all offences of the same kind committed on the reforming side, that an honest election would have carried into the house such an overpowering majority of the reformers as would have sent the tory ministry once for all to their proper places, instead of that bare and fluctuating majority which they can 'brave from the strong fortification of office; or with which, even if they were dislodged, they can maintain powerful, long, and baffling fight, backed by an augmented force and pertinacity in the quarters hitherto obstinate against reform. But now, sir, does it remain yet a question, at this time of day, what is the true theory of popular representation, according to any doctrine of our so lauded constitution, and according to the intention of the Reform Bill? Am I allowed to assume it as the theory and intention, that the national constituency shall freely and honestly vote according to their judgment of measures and men; that, instructed, reasoned with, pleaded with as much as you please, they shall yet be determined in their choice by nothing but their deliberate approbation; and that every thing to the contrary of this is, so far, treason against the national polity? If so, this most important function, ought to be guarded with every possible security for its faithful exercise. And I need not ask you whether the present condition of the exercise of what is pretended to be conferred as a right and a privilege, imposing a most serious duty, be not a flagrant mockery. With the venal, it is a privileged occasion of having their country to sell; with the dependent, it is a badge of slavery; with those who are conscientious as well as dependent, it is a painful trial of principle; all which abuses reached their last excess in the recent election, and are now to have their result in the legislature. If this vast and multifarious mass of evil be really inseparable from the representative system, it is time to lower the tone of our boasting about our liberal institutions—our government by enlightened opinion—the independent spirit of Englishmen, and all that. Especially we should get sober from our inebriated exultation over our parliamentary reform.

How little did you, or any of us, anticipate in our triumph at having accomplished, by the reform bill, a final overthrow, as we fancied, of the party who had so long reigned and profited by corruption, that within two years we should have the rank, unmixed essence of that party, as embodied in the fiercest opponents of reform, again in command of the state, and supported by one-half, within a trifle, of the so-called House of Commons? a proportion so close upon an equality of numbers, that if the tories had been willing to disburse a very small addition of money to the million they are computed to have expended, or had given a few ounces harder pressure to the compulsion on the unprotected voters, they would have had the formal advantage of a majority in the House. You deny, with small exception, that this is from any reaction in the opinions of the national constituency. Then what a wretched system—what an utterly fallacious mode of requiring a declaration of the public sentiment, you must acknowledge the present thing called election to be; and most formidable must be the evils involved in a remedial expedient that would substantially avail for a true expression of that sentiment, if they would be any thing near as great as having the expression of it so widely and deeply falsified. You will surmise that the expedient I have in view is no other than the Ballot. And what other has any man suggested, with even an appearance of plausibility? Those who are not against it unconditionally and at all events, are saying, Let us first try every thing else. What is it that they have to try? Laws against bribery have notoriously been a dead letter. If an instance or two of conviction occur (as recently at Cambridge), it takes us by surprise, as a thing we could not have reckoned on. In cases where every body knew that bribery had pervaded every street of a town, with a pollution as gross as the stream in its kennels, it has been found impossible to produce that sort of precise and technical proof demanded by legal men, and by members of parliamentary committees, some of them, perchance, having reasons of their own for being punctilious in the admission of evidence. And what mode of jurisdiction can you contrive to take cognizance of intimidation, practised by landlords, employers, wealthy



customers, clergymen, parish officers, the heads of public offices and corporation magnates—intimidation often conveyed through hints and inuendoes, perfectly intelligible to those who dare not misunderstand them, but so slightly expressed that they would seem to vanish into nothing when attempted to be made the foundation of a criminal charge? Let us wait in the hope (something to this effect was lately said by Lord John Russell) of the growth of a more honourable and virtuous feeling, by which influential men will become ashamed of such base practices. But how are you to send them back to pass through a new school of morals? And tell me, if you can, of any incipient symptom of such a change. Which of them is at all ashamed of the recent exploits in this line? Is any one of them the worse received in the rank of society to which he belongs? Are not their performances, if they have been successful, a subject of complacent and jocular reference in their select coteries? It is there a good joke how they drove their cattle to—the hustings, while some of the radical creatures were internally grumbling, or even giving vent to their chagrin in impotent mutterings. And who is to teach and exhort them to turn from their bad courses? Will not many of their spiritual instructors (if accounts be true) have cause to be very lenient in their reprehensions? Even Lord John Russell himself was evidently very sceptical as to any such progress to honour and honesty; and, pressed by the evidence that, instead of an abatement, there is an aggravation of the evil, acknowledged that we may at last be driven to the ballot. As no other expedient in a tangible form is proposed from any quarter, we are left to the alternative of resorting to this, or of surrendering the grand palladium, as it has been called, of our popular rights and liberties to a malignant agency which essentially vitiates, and will not cease to vitiate, our legislature and legislation. Yes, this is the alternative, we are brought to the plain question whether we be, as the constitutional doctrine pretends, or be not, to have an actual faithful representation? If this be not an idle theoretical fancy, but a practical thing, to which we have a right that ought to be maintained, we must maintain it by the means by which alone we *can* maintain it. As being our sole resource,

the expedient is necessarily the right one, whatever evils of its own it may involve. You deny the right itself, if you deny the right of using the only effectual means for our possession of it. You treat us with the ludicrous and spiteful absurdity of first appointing an institution for the public welfare—essential, all-important, you proclaim, for good government—and then telling us that, nevertheless, the only means for making it effectual are worse than leaving it to be frustrated. It is a capitally contrived machine, only it cannot be worked so as to effect its purpose without the application of an implement that will make it scatter mischief all around it. But better send it to the lumber-room at once, if it cannot effect the good it is intended for without a balance, or over-balance, of damage from the only mode of working by which it can effect that good. Why continue working it in a manner which, while it causes much greater damage another way, does not, but very partially, effect the intended good? We do not deny that evils of very considerable amount would attend the ballot, especially in the earlier stages of the practice, but if we account them such that we must reject it though we have no other way of obtaining an approximation to the faithful action of the representative principle, we plainly say that we forego that pretended essential requisite to good government, and submit to be misrepresented, to a great and pernicious extent, in the legislature. And so we must sit down in helpless resignation, till the stars shall be more auspicious; till unprincipled wealth and arrogance shall spontaneously cease to bribe and threaten; or our universal constituency shall rise to such a pitch of virtue and courage as to reject the offered purchase money, and defy at every hazard the menaced revenge. A goodly prospect, and a *short interval* for the exercise of our patience under a perverted legislation!—a legislation which may, meanwhile, create for our posterity also abundant occasion for the exercise of *their* patience, in addition to that load of debt which preceding parliaments, convened under a mere sham of representation, have entailed on us and them.

I am, &c.

AN INDEPENDENT ELECTOR.

## II.

*April 25, 1835.*

In adverting to the evils incident to the ballot, and in a degree inseparable from it till it should have worked into decided practice and power, I must lay the chief stress on those of a *moral* nature. The anti-reformers lecture on these in a strain of conscientious horror; but they may be suspected to have far other, and in their view stronger, objections to secret voting. With them the greatest evil is the very thing which we are anxious to obtain as the greatest good—the conveyance into parliament of the genuine national opinion and will. In opposing the motion for the ballot, so ably and eloquently brought forward by Mr. Grote in 1833, Sir Robert Peel honestly avowed his grand objection to be, that the ballot “would give a much more democratic House of Commons, which he thought quite needless;” a declaration that the electors, in the present manner of voting, are far from the free exercise of their pretended privilege; that the ballot would be a remedy for that wrong; and that, as far as depended on him, that wrong should be perpetuated. In this declaration he stood forth a genuine representative in one capacity, whatever he were in another; he expressed the mind of the anti-reformers; for they to a man have voted, and will again vote, against the ballot, on the very same principle. He, therefore, is but an equivocal reformer, who declaims against the detestable system by which they vitiate the popular suffrage and representation; and, at the same time, joins them in denouncing the expedient by which he has their own confession that the system would be substantially abolished.

The moral evils correctly alleged against the ballot, fall chiefly within a comprehensive sense of the term falsehood. To importunate or imperative candidates, or canvassers, would be given many promises not intended to be performed; under protection of secrecy they would be violated; on subsequent inquisition or accusation there would be unscrupulous affirmations that they had been kept: there would be maintained before, and during, and after, the season of election, a system of distrust, concealment,

duplicity, equivocation, injurious to the moral principle and habit, and repressive of the frank intercourse of society. The arraignment is eagerly exaggerated; but it is true to the extent of forming a serious charge; and it is easily made to appear fatal against the ballot, in an argument that takes no further account of moral considerations than barely and exclusively as implicated with that practice. In listening to debates on the subject, it has struck me as very curious, that opposers of this mode of election on moral grounds, reason and declaim as if they had to deal with an insulated topic, altogether independent of relative and comparative considerations. Prove the ballot to be liable to these grave objections, and we must look no further—there is an end of the matter; as if an election were one of those affairs which, if a certain proposed mode of transacting them be exceptionable, need not and will not be transacted at all; or as if, when it is a thing that must and will take place, a knowledge of the manner in which it will be transacted, if the one proposed be rejected, had nothing to do with the question whether it ought to be rejected. They really talk as if no such thing were known as a necessity of choosing between two evils, with an obligation to put them in the balance, and choose the less. They say, in effect, that we are to look at one side, taken separately; and if there be much belonging to it that we cannot approve, we are to determine for the other at all hazards, whatever may be the evils involved in it.

Let the ballot, on the one side, stand obnoxious to the serious exceptions which I have enumerated, and then let us see what we have on the other. There is a direct violation of both justice and law, in applying the resources of wealth and power to pervert the national suffrage, and so to frustrate the whole end of the institution. A general venality is indefatigably promoted, and promoted by the classes who are under special obligations to be the patrons of virtue, but whom the persons tempted and corrupted by them are gratified thus to find no better than themselves; and who thus forfeit all moral influence of station over those below them, by whom it is shrewdly presumed, that those who will purchase others will, if they find a good market, sell themselves. Hundreds of thousands are

suborned by what they know it to be wrong for them to take, and for their superiors to give. All sentiments of public virtue are rooted out, and a great public interest sunk into a traffic of the basest selfishness. The corruption powerfully operates to sap all moral principle in their minds; especially under the aggravating circumstance, that this bribery, vicious in itself, often leads to a direct plunge into other vices, the revels of intemperance and every disorder. It leads also to the falsehood and prevarication which are alleged against the ballot, as if *that* alone could be the guilty cause of such vices. For, will not the receivers of bribes conceal and deny, in any society but that of kindred baseness, that they have sold their votes; at least such of them as have some decency of character to maintain among their neighbours? especially, when close upon the dubious termination of a hard-run contest, prices have risen very high, will the receiver of the value of a horse, or two or three cows, be disposed to tell how he came by the money? Will he not, if challenged, invent a story of any other source rather than own the true one? I dare say the decently reputed elector, who lately, in one of our boroughs, near the last critical moment, was strongly suspected of receiving more than £200 for his vote, given contrary to his positive promise, which was claimed by the opposite candidate, will have taken especial care, and expended a good per-centage of lies on his pounds, to avoid the proof.

There is the cheaper, the prouder, the still more effective iniquity, of compulsion by intimidation. Of this part of the subject it is impossible to make a more condensed, or vigorous, or revolting exhibition, than that in Mr. Grote's eloquent printed speech, which every member, who expects to vote on the next motion for the ballot, would do well to read and ponder. During the warfare, which ended in carrying the Reform Bill, many of the aristocracy, while vexed at losing the rotten boroughs, might possibly have had some presentiment, never suspected by our simplicity, of a partial and very considerable compensation, in a way which, though less suited to their convenience, would be more gratifying to their pride. They, perhaps, calculated that the enlarged constituency, instead of creating an in-

dependent power to defy them, would but supply them, in many instances, with so many more subjects to command; at the same time that it would abate the former opprobrium of monopoly, by a plausible appearance of a much more popular election than when they, or their nominees, were sent up by two or three dozen of what were called voters. And the recent election has shown that this, if they made it, was no mistaken calculation.

But look at the odious spectacle, think of the national infamy, of perhaps more than a quarter of a million of men, invested with what they are told to consider as an honourable privilege, admonished that it lays on them a most serious duty, appointed and recognized as the exponents of the opinion and will of the vast community, summoned and appealed to for the expression of its mind, arrayed as in a mighty guardianship of its interests—think of so immense a portion of the men standing in this capacity and under this responsibility, being placed in the alternative of either violating the obligation, and doing a wrong to their country, or incurring such immediate, direct, private injury, as will infallibly be felt as too much to suffer for a public duty. Think of the arrogance that plainly and insolently threatens, or the signified will of the power which needs but to hint, the frustration of a man's industry, the loss of his business and subsistence, the turning out of his situation, the expulsion from his house or his farm; or, in the humble grade, the deprivation of aid from philanthropic institutions, unless he will do what the tyrannic authority is committing a villainous wrong in exacting, on the pain of such a consequence. Imagine the suppressed, or confidentially uttered resentments, "the curses, not loud, but deep," among one portion of the bondmen; and the conscious self-degradation, mingled with the indignant feelings against the oppressor, in the virtuous portion; many a one of whom has, for a while, maintained a resolution to do his duty at whatever cost, but has looked once more at his family—and yielded. For, let it be especially remembered, that the severity of the wrong is aggravated just in proportion to the good principle, the conscientiousness of those on whom it is inflicted. And it gives a strange idea of a privilege, that it should be a grievance in proportion as the

possessor would make conscience of his manner of using it. An excellent notion, too, of an institution expressly designed for the defence of popular liberty, that it should be skilfully adapted to be seized upon for the benefit of aristocratic tyranny; at the same time a fine encouragement to public and all other virtue, that while the honest man finds himself exposed to punishment for maintaining his integrity, he should see that certain of his neighbours are awarded for not troubling themselves with any such incumbance.

The result of all this is, what I have so much insisted on before, that the popular branch of the legislature is not a genuine representation of the people: and either the insulting theoretic figment that it is so, should be honestly flung away, or a mode of election should be adopted that will approach to a realization of that professed intention.

Now, sir, you have to place this aggravated and complicated mass of evil on the one side, and over against it whatever vicious properties or accidents are attributable to the ballot. And in default of any effectual middle expedient, what have you to do? It would be no better than a travesty of morality for you to say, "There needs no deliberation; there are bad things inseparable from the ballot; I shall give my sanction to them by adopting it; but I must on no terms sanction what is bad; I must, therefore, reject it absolutely, be the consequence what it may"—when the consequence may be, that you choose what involves a much greater proportion of evil; which, therefore, you sanction, under this very affectation of scrupulous moral principle. At the least, you decidedly give your sanction to all that proportion of immorality by which the part you choose exceeds that which you reject.

And now, as to the comparative proportions.—I confess I am at a loss to understand, how an unprejudiced, well-principled observer can look at all the abominations of the present mode of election—the school for the discipline of venality, periodically opened all over the land, in the form of a market, for the sale of men's frail integrity, under a knavish management of all manner of deceit and subterfuge, and amidst the temptations to coarser vice—another sort of contemporary agency, violating law, and right, and all

the worthier feelings of humanity; crushing the independence of inferiors; turning their nominal privilege into a practical conviction that they are slaves; compelling them, on pain of great, and even ruinous injury, to sacrifice the judgment and conscience which it has been inculcated upon them to exercise and obey; forcing them to give, in practice, the lie to their opinion; perpetuating all practicable revenge against such resolutely conscientious, but dependent men, as do their duty in despite of menaces, which they know will be executed—and the upshot of all this in a spurious legislature: I say, I cannot understand how any upright, plain-judging man, can think this vast compost of iniquity, a less amount of evil than the temporary concealment or dissimulation, the breaking of extorted promises, and the prevarication to be resorted to for eluding tyranny and revenge, which are the delinquencies alleged, and partly with truth, to be incident to the ballot.

Far be it from me to make a light account of these delinquencies, by which integrity is so seriously damaged. I may allow that they are great evils with perfect safety to the argument that they are rather to be incurred than the greater ones on the other side. But still, there is unquestionably to be admitted a very material qualification of the moral estimate of them, from the consideration that they are modes of dishonesty, practised for the very purpose, as the accusation itself acknowledges, of maintaining honesty in the discharge of the electoral duty, consistently with impunity in so performing it. The persons resorting to these expedients are in the situation of a man who is about going with money to pay his debts, and is beset by a villainous extortioner, or a robber on the high way; and the sternest moralist would not refuse to acknowledge a great palliation of the turpitude of an insincere promise or a false declaration, made to elude these personages, in order that his money might go to its right use. And if one of these exactors should afterwards chance to discover that he had thus been *defrauded*, what would you think of his exclaiming, with a virtuous indignation against the falsehood, the immorality of the man, who had by such means disappointed his wicked attempt? And what should I think of you, if you joined him in this righteous indignation,—



saying, that though, to be sure, it was not quite the thing that he should have made the attempt on the man's property, yet it was extremely criminal in the man to protect himself against the plunderer by such means?

But I cannot help noticing here what a strange leaning to the side of power (one of the worst and most general of our ill propensities), I have observed in the reasoning of the opposers of the ballot, on the moral ground that it would facilitate and protect the breach of promises. They constantly give the benefit of their casuistry to the oppressor's side. If the dependent voter, shrinking at threatened injury, shall have given a promise contrary to his judgment and conscience, his obligation, according to these moralists, is, from that moment, perfectly simple and unequivocal. No matter that his fears have brought him into a dilemma between, on the one side the obligation of his promise, and, on the other, the prior inalienable duty which he owes at once to his country and to himself, for the faithful exercise of his electoral function. His obligation is all on the left hand; he is solemnly bound, in allegiance to the tyrant, to fulfil a promise yielded under the hard stress of self-preservation, and to give his paramount obligation to the winds. Else he is lectured with the most imposing gravity on the crime of violating promises; while his oppressor incurs only the tolerant censure of having somewhat overstrained one of the advantages of his higher situation. And lest he should be deprived, through secret voting, of the benefit of such lightly censurable injustice, the dependent voter shall be left absolutely at his mercy. So sure are we, moralists and all, to find the least to blame on the stronger side!

"But why will the electors *let* themselves be coerced?" In the manful oratory of those who can talk at their ease we hear it said—let the electors show themselves worthy of the privilege conferred on them; let them with one consent vindicate their right with a noble resolution, and then, &c., &c. Why, yes; *then*, the supposed consequences would follow. But if the discussion, instead of a vain speculation on what would take place *if* things were—as they are not, be an inquiry for something that should avail for the desired object in the actual state of things, it is answer

enough to this brave suggestion to say, that no such thing can be; that it is idle to talk of men who are dependent in numberless ways, setting up a general defiance of the dictates and menaces of a most powerful aristocracy, determined, as there is no want of examples to warn those who wish they could dare to be refractory, that such a crime will certainly not go unpunished. But I must observe in addition, that it is wrong for men to be placed in a condition to require heroic virtue for the honest performance of a common duty of citizenship. That must be a badly adjusted institution which practically tells a man, that his integrity in such a thing as voting for a member of parliament, in a state, too, which is boasting of its political freedom, shall be at much of the same cost as fidelity to his religion might have been in times of intolerance and persecution.

I am, &c.

AN INDEPENDENT ELECTOR.

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### III.

*April 27, 1835.*

SIR,—The epithet “un-English” has not yet quite dropped out of the phraseology of the opposers of the ballot. It is foolish cant. What! it is foreign to the English character, is it, for a man, who is industriously and anxiously prosecuting some humble occupation, or for a middling tradesman, to be dismayed at the threat of well-armed power to blast his success, destroy his resources, do all that such power can do, to reduce him to penury or bankruptcy? It is “un-English,” is it, for a man in some subordinate office to be reluctant to resign his salary, his only support, knowing how indifferent a chance the eager competition for situations allows him for obtaining another; or for a small farmer to shrink at the prospect of being ordered off from the dwelling and acres where he is tolerably supporting his family, and has, perhaps, been at the expense of improvements in the convenience and cultivation?

Some of the opposers are asserting that, notwithstanding

all the protection that the ballot might seem to afford, the efforts at coercion would still be continued, by hinted threats, inquisitorial harassings, and revenge at hazard on suspected and presumed disobedience. Suppose this admitted to be true, the argument will then be, that since the odious tyranny will do all it can to harass the dependent electors, in spite of their protection, we are to leave them exposed to its whole unmitigated power, by refusing them even a partial defence; since they would be liable to be tracked and annoyed amidst their coverts, give their enemy the advantage of fairly running them down in the open field.

But after all, and whatever might for a while be attempted or inflicted by unprincipled power, nobody doubts that substantially it would be defeated. There would be a strong determination on the part of the heretofore enslaved citizens, to verify their new privilege. And the arrogant and imperative classes, finding that the elections did and would, through the combined resolution and evasion of the electors, render their threatenings impotent, and the extorted promises worthless, would abandon in despair a mode of interference which obtained them no success adequate as a compensation for the odium; an odium, which would be aggravated by any attempted perseverance of injustice, following up the former violation of the freedom of the electors with a determination to break through the specific provision given them for security against it.

Bribery, however, I have heard it asserted, would still be largely practised. If so, men must set a lower value on their money in this sort of traffic than in any other. In what other bargain will they part with it under an uncertainty whether they shall obtain *any* of the stipulated equivalent, and a certainty that in many instances they will be defrauded, and without remedy? The case is, too, that it would be the mutual consciousness of rogue dealing with rogue; the receiver of the bribe scorning to admit any sense of obligation to be honest to the payer. He will receive it with the ill-suppressed look which would say, You are a rascal, you are making me one, but yours shall be the forfeit. The self-taxing corrupter must have a strong fancy for adding the decoration of folly to his baseness, since he would know that the bribe taken from him will be

an excellent sedative to the principle, and hint to the cupidity of the elector, for making a similar profit of the dishonour of the opposite candidate; after which he will go and vote just as he pleases; perhaps cajoling any remainder left him of conscience with the consideration, that he has at any rate performed *one* of his promises.

As to an objection that has been made against the ballot as giving an "irresponsible power" to the voters, I believe nobody really feels it of the smallest force. It is not worth while to go into any question of abstract principle. Look at the practical state of the case. The allegation has been explained to refer chiefly to a responsibility in which the electors stand, or ought to stand, to the large body of the population below them; and means, if it have any definable meaning, that they would be taken, by the privilege of secret voting, out of the proper sympathy of that inferior portion of the community, and might be indifferent or unjust to its interests in their choice of representatives. Now, under this pretended solicitude about justice to the opinion, will, and interests of the lower order of the people, what is the real ground on which every high aristocrat, every tory, in parliament will vote against the ballot? Commend me again, for that, to Sir Robert Peel's honest avowal, expressive of the sentiment of all the class, that the grand objection against the ballot is, that "it would give a much more democratic House of Commons;" that is, a house more, and far too much, partaking of the feelings, and partial to the interests of the common people. And it requires a patience more than philosophic to hear this pretended concern for preventing the escape of the voters from their responsibility of justice and good-will to the lower orders, when the whole pleading goes plainly to subject them under a slavish and pernicious responsibility to the upper classes. Lest they should be disposed or tempted to fail in their duty of being guardians of the rights, and considerate of the wishes, of the unprivileged multitude, they shall stand in full exposure to be bribed or over-awed to confirm, by their votes that imperious oligarchic domination which they hold the elective franchise under a responsibility to those below them for resisting in their defence. But if I have mistaken the quarter to which the argument points, and if the meaning

be, after all, that the power of the electors should not be "irresponsible" to those above them, I have only to observe, that a power which you hold, subject to an arbitrary power above you, that can dictate how you shall use it, is very much like no power at all. You would not do amiss to divest yourself at once of the honour and the trouble.

I observe that something is to be attempted, or at least proposed in parliament, towards the prevention of this monstrous iniquity. Have you any faith in the efficacy of the expedients for either prevention or punishment? How many corrupted voters, or corrupting purveyors of votes, will tender evidence of bribery? Or how obtain witnesses to a clandestine proceeding in which themselves had no share? How can the multifarious and elusive modes of bribery be reduced to any exact definition? And as to intimidation, how will the elector who had not courage to disobey, for fear of punishment to himself, find courage to be prominently active towards the punishment of the tyrant? And how, if he should, will you secure his subsequent impunity against revenge, which will come on him in such ways as no legal provision can obviate? His landlord, suppose, is convicted and punished on his evidence. This will be an excellent security against the prompt exercise of his landlord's indisputable right to turn him out of his house or farm! How much of course is it, also, that the man of wealth will continue his custom to the man of trade who has been the cause of his paying a heavy fine, or has ineffectually attempted to do him that favour.

It has been said that the guilt in question is not so much chargeable on candidates as on vile underling agents. But how many of the honourable gentlemen have peremptorily interdicted to their agents all such practices; or conveyed beforehand (in imitation of some of the liberals) a positive assurance to the constituency that no man should suffer any harm from them for the freedom of his vote; or declared they absolved the voters from any promises they might have been induced to make contrary to their judgment? And which of them, afterwards made aware, or strongly suspecting, that their election has been gained by such means, will be forward to promote the investigation and the justice? What vile agent, whose activity brought

the deciding votes in one of the late contests, would find himself and his offered services spurned with abhorrence by the same candidate next time ?

I should somewhere in this paper have observed, that the ballot would go far to rid our elections of the abominable nuisance of outrage, bullying, fighting, smashing of windows, and other flagrant breaches of the peace, by which a most important public transaction is so often turned into a scene of infamous barbarism. When the adherents of the opposed interests come to the place of election merely as so many individuals, presenting no ostensible shape of marshalled parties, there would be nothing tangible enough to excite the tumultuary violence. Would not this alone be a benefit to set off against more than half of whatever can be alleged against the ballot? And it would obviate the disgust which the more sober, and the contempt which the more refined, portion of the community are apt to conceive for the whole character of democracy ; I may add, the aversion with which persons coming from foreign communities must witness the "working," as we name it, of our popular institutions. One has often imagined with shame what would be thought by any of the subjects of the more tolerant foreign despotisms, who might come to see the methods for constituting a legislature in our famous land of liberty.

I am gratified to perceive that a conviction of the necessity of the ballot is fast gaining ground ; and that, at all events, the famous management of elections will be forced on public and legislative attention. What is it that thus forces it into discussion, but the notoriety and unprecedented extent of the infamous management in the recent general election? And to this very cause it is mainly owing that the tory party have regained the vantage ground where we have been doomed to see them once more.

Lest you should suspect that I have been stimulated to trouble you with the above cursory observations by some grievances experienced by myself, I beg, sir, to assure you that I am a perfectly

INDEPENDENT ELECTOR.

## IV.

June 15, 1835.

SIR,—I may well doubt whether your indulgence can extend to the admission of the following paragraphs, which (uncertain whether to trouble you with them) I had put on paper before seeing your correspondent's letter. If the long paper which you did me the favour to insert, on the subject of the ballot, instead of being written several weeks before the press of parliamentary and other public matters allowed its admission, had been written now, I should have ventured to make it a trifle longer by an observation or two suggested by what has subsequently occurred.

I am wishing that there existed any such thing as a test for ascertaining how much of what statesmen utter in the senate is what they really think. You have recalled from one of Sir Robert Peel's speeches a passage which had strongly arrested my own attention.

"We may be weak here," said the Right Honourable Baronet; "but this I tell you again, respectfully, but with a firm conviction of its truth, that there is a public opinion which exists independently of majorities—which is not controlled by votes—which it is essentially necessary to possess, in addition to mere majorities in this House. I never felt more convinced of anything than I do of this truth, that the public opinion will not sanction—it will with its submission, but not with its approbation sanction—your efforts, even if they were successful, to throw impediments in the way of the useful measures of Government." This was said in immediate reference to the majorities on the question of the Irish Church; and was a declaration that the decision against maintaining entire the wealth of that Church, was in contrariety to the prevailing opinion of the nation; and it sounded like a solemn warning of the consequences of setting that opinion at defiance. The Parliamentary Report did not say how he *looked* at the time; but the language on paper has all the appearance of oracular gravity. Now, did he not, at the time he uttered it, know perfectly to what cause it was owing that the majority against him was not far greater? Was he not most perfectly aware that a very great number of those who swelled

up his ministerial ranks, so nearly to an equality with the antagonist party, had been brought into the House *against* the real preponderance of opinion in the respective constituencies, and by the most shameful means? Did he not know perfectly, that if that opinion had been allowed its free operation throughout the general election, he would have had a House of Commons which would have speedily quashed, almost scouted, by an overwhelming majority, every attempt to resist the reforming—even *that proposed mode* of the reforming—of that Church? Is it possible that all this should not have been clearly within his knowledge when he nevertheless put forth against the Reformers in the House a solemn menace of the condemnation of the people on their proceedings?

“Weak in this House,” did he say, as compared with the state of “public opinion” out of it? Why, then, in the name of common sense, had not his party allowed the general election to convey the public opinion free and genuine into that House? How much expense, and labour, and infamy, they might have spared, and been better off, it seems, in the issue! Never in the world, surely, was there so unaccountably luckless an operation, as that an almost preternatural exertion of all the faculties, powers, resources, advantages of that party, to persuade, bribe, and compel an ostensible demonstration of the public opinion in their favour, should have resulted in a failure to convey into the House the actual amount of such favourable opinion existing in the national mind! The rarest freak that the capricious malice of fortune ever sported yet! But *what* opinion, *whose* opinion, was it that Sir Robert meant by the description “public?” For we have had his own acknowledgment that the Ballot would carry into the House a greatly augmented force of that kind of opinion which would oppose him there; and evidently it could do so only by giving a more free and true expression of the opinion of the collective constituency. By “public opinion,” therefore, he just means the opinion of his party. And it was most ungrateful of him to fall foul of the House; for in force of opinion there, instead of weaker, he and they are incomparably stronger than in the nation at large.

Let it be observed, that the proceeding over which the



national frown was to darken was nothing new, nothing presenting to the people an altered aspect of the reforming system, and so bringing to view an unforeseen cause for changing their opinion. The former election had been made with their knowledge and approbation that the avowedly reforming representatives were to lay strong hands on the superfluities of the Irish hierarchy. The same thing was fully in their sight and their approbation in the recent election, by which they returned, in spite of the most prodigious exertions to prevent them, that very majority on whom Sir R. Peel denounces their smothered wrath for doing the very thing which they intended and required their representatives to do—against not a few of which representatives, for renegade conduct in this identical affair, they *cannot* smother their anger. I repeat, the subject of the Irish Church stood broad, palpable, and unchanged, before that national judgment, that “public opinion;” and so unquestionable and decided was the national verdict upon it, that I may ask with perfect confidence, would Sir Robert and his associates have ventured to go to a general election on any assurance that the real opinion of the people would be with them on the subject of the Irish Church? Did they, any of them, believe that the nation had awaked to alarm and horror at the idea of curtailing its sinecure emoluments? Would they have ventured it, nay, would they have ventured on office itself, in the confidence of any thing but the possession by their party of immense means and powers of intimidating and corrupting the constituency,—of which means and powers they were sure there would be in their favour a desperately strenuous employment? “Get a new Parliament in your favour” would have been felt a bitter sneer, if a real protection to the voters could have come between.

It may well be doubted whether, on any other reliance, the re-election of the numerous reforming members, who have vacated their seats by accepting office under Lord Melbourne, would have been contested in more than one or two instances by the Tories, notwithstanding the assurance of success implied in the above-cited oracle, which denounced upon the sacrilegious conspirators against the inviolability of the ecclesiastical sinecures, the indignation of the people. What will they think now of their Magnus

Apollo, after the experiment which has stultified what he uttered with such imposing pomp about the temper of the popular mind, and has for once frustrated, with small exception, all the accustomed vile machinery (reinforced by the Popery humbug as an extra tool) for suppressing the genuine manifestation of that mind?

Perhaps you, Sir, or some reader, will tell me that this practical manifestation of independence, in so considerable a number of constituencies, affords an argument against the necessity of the Ballot. I answer, that though this be true with respect to several of the great and resolute constituencies, such as Edinburgh, Manchester, &c., there are, with respect to others of them, strong considerations in favour of the Ballot, in the circumstance that the success of some of the Liberal candidates (quite certain beforehand, had the voting been free) was evidently put in great hazard—that the majorities were far smaller in almost every instance than a free election would have given—that a large addition was made to the accumulated infamy of our election practices—that towns and districts were again thrown into violent commotion, all the rude passions and habits exasperated, industry broken up, and the patience of honest electors exhausted—and, finally, that the evidence thus obtained of the possibility of maintaining, by the old corrupt means, a nearly equal contest against reform, with chances and hopes of eventual success, confirms the confidence and determination to renew it on every returning occasion. It is thus that the good cause cannot be supported but at a great and pernicious cost; and is not only retarded in its advancement, but kept in continual peril of being partially defeated. It would have fared much better under the safeguard of the Ballot, in many of these last and successful trials; and they, we have cause to know, dearly as they achieved its victories, are far too good to be a specimen of what its fortunes would be, without that safeguard, in a general election.

Allow me a word or two on a minor topic of the day. You have repeatedly remarked on the producing causes and rank tumidity of the addresses to Sir R. Peel. One of the most curious things in human nature and folly is, that men can be gratified by forms of adulation, of which at the very

time, they know a large portion to be worthless. It would be amusing to learn what Sir R. Peel would, in any perfectly confidential intercourse, say of the flush of laudatory tributes which has baffled his utmost power of gratitude to acknowledge. He has more than a guess at the sort of management employed in the taxation which has poured in this revenue upon him. But whatever discount he may make from the value of the sum total, he will make none, it may be presumed, from that part of it resulting from the judicious and conscientious activity of ecclesiastics. It is not for me to say how far the general quality of that portion may be fairly represented by a sample in my immediate neighbourhood, where a sort of persons were had up to sign the address, whose names would have been scorned for any other use; and where parishioners of somewhat more account, making a slight demur, and asking the purport of the document, were laconically told by the clergyman, that it was to prevent our having a Popish Government, and that they must sign it unless they were willing to become the miserable subjects of such a Government.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

AN INDEPENDENT ELECTOR.

P.S.—Since the above was written the question has been again debated, and for the present decided, in the House of Commons. I confess I did expect that a larger proportion of the Reforming party, after what they had seen of the general election—after their harassing contest against the iniquitous system to maintain their seats, and after having been chagrined at the expulsion of so many of their own esteemed colleagues, and so many liberal representatives of other constituencies, would, at last, have declared for the remedial resource.

The mover's speech was distinguished by even still greater cogency, point, and comprehension, than his former; and it appears to have been replied to, for the most part, in a manner remarkably superficial, evasive, and powerless; though, on the part of some of the speakers, in a magisterial and supercilious tone of authority. In reading the report, it is curious to see the cant phrases, the hackneyed commonplaces, and the gratuitous assertions, repeated as confidently

as if the able mover, and those who seconded and supported him, had not said one effective sentence to the purpose of exposing and exploding them; while the enormous mischief sought to be put an end to, or as much as possible abated, could be passed by as a matter nearly of indifference. One is confounded to see the proposed expedient for the protection of dependent electors resisted on the ground that we must require an integrity of voting, an honest manifestation of opinion, and so forth, in the constituency; when the argument for the ballot has its strongest force in this very point, the notorious fact, that to more than half of them the open voting thus-preposterously insisted on as the test and security of their integrity, ensures their punishment if they do not violate it. Is this insincerity, or obtuseness?

One speaker, if I recollect, said the people had only to be faithful and resolute in doing their duty, and all would go right! Even that sagacious saying, that secret voting is alien from the spirit of the English character, was, it seems, to have one more turn for repetition—the English of which is, that it is in fittest propriety to the English character that Englishmen (let them only be bamboozled with the *name* of freemen) should be driven into submissive obedience as slaves.

But the matter of greatest curiosity in the debate, must have been to see what position Lord John Russell would take, after his recent experience of this same free, open English voting, and the earnest adjurations addressed to him in consequence. And that curiosity must, in many of his auditors, have gone into surprise with a bounce, at hearing what he said toward the end of his speech. For, according to the report of it, he declared his belief that “this House is now the fair representative of the people of this country.” What, then, he believes, what all the Reformers have been constantly denying, and what their opponents have been proclaimed guilty of the utmost effrontery for asserting, that there has been a grand reaction in the mind of the nation—a re-action so immense as to send into the House toward a hundred members additional to the ranks of his opponents, thus reducing the supporters of the reforming Ministry so nearly to a level of numbers with their antagonists; rendering the stability of

the present or any reforming Ministry a doubtful problem; confirming the confidence and obstinacy of the obstructive branches of the Government; inspiring at once a sanguine expectation and an ardour of exertion into all ranks of the anti-reformers; and exciting throughout the liberal majority of the nation an alarming apprehension for the success of any and all great measures of reform. Yet this is, "a fair representative of the people of this country;" this is what the Reform Bill was meant to confer on them; and this is to be boldly set forth as proof of the needlessness of the Ballot, which would give such a demonstration of the opinion of the people as to place that ministry and the popular cause on a ground, compared with which they now stand on a quagmire.

Lord John was peremptory again on the topic of "irresponsible power" in the electors, responsively to a "cheered" dictum of a previous speaker, that "the surest check to impropriety is publicity." Now this, in the actual state of things, can practically mean just nothing else but plainly that hundreds of thousands of the electors are to be held obsequiously responsible to their tyrannic superiors, since it is at their peril that they acknowledge any different responsibility.

But Lord John promises for those tyrannic superiors that they shall mend; that they will become ashamed of such vile injustice; will grow candid, liberal, equitable, and what not. Why, if his judgment be correct, that we now *have* "a fair representative," which would imply that these reputed tyrants have *not* perverted the elections, except in Devonshire and a few other places, there would not seem to be any particular *need* that they should reform their proceedings. What wrong can they have done? But according to *our* notions of how they have acted, and are disposed to act, the only ground to reckon on for their amendment would be the old maxim, that when things come to the worst they *must* mend. And perhaps the worst is hardly yet come. For in the event (not obscurely menaced) of another dissolution, Lord John knows perfectly well that there would be, if possible, a still more desperately extreme exertion, in utter defiance of all restraints even of decency, to defeat and crush the reforming spirit of the nation.

Mr. Editor, on a slight glance back on the papers for which you have conceded me so much room in your columns, I have been mortified to perceive what reiteration I have fallen into on the one point of our being saddled with a spurious legislature, in consequence of the frustration to so miserable an extent of the intention of the Reform Bill. But, really, how can one suppress one's wonder to see it thoughtlessly admitted, or a much more re-active sentiment than wonder to see it coolly asserted, that the people are now fairly represented in the House of Commons?

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## V.

September 15, 1835.

SIR,—Your laconic notice of Mr. Roebuck's letter to his late constituents, simply "referring your readers to it," may be a compliment to the quick apprehension and right judgment of those readers; but does not indicate *what* estimate it is that you assume they will so promptly form of the contents of that letter.

Without the slightest knowledge, of Mr. Roebuck, beyond what any provincial reader obtains from his reported speeches, I regret that so able an advocate for the interests and projected measures which he enumerates should not again be in Parliament. At the same time, it is with some modification of his senatorial conduct that I should wish him there. Though I should not join in any loud exclamation that "he goes too far," as to ultimate purposes, I am of the mind of a great number of genuine and even radical reformers, in thinking that he might have adopted a *manner* of going which would have advanced more commodiously, and perhaps effectively, though he would have thought not so directly, towards the object of accomplishing our national reforms—I mean internal reforms, leaving out of view the questions relating to Canada. For the sake of the good cause, we have been aggrieved by his rash impetuosity, his pugnacious intemperance, his contempt sometimes of partial and attainable reforms, as a patient progress towards the theoretic and

complete ones; his aptitude to throw himself obstructively in the way of the movement, honestly, as we believe, attempted in the face of immense difficulties by the more cautious battalion of reformers, with the ministry at their head; in short, his being one of the most prominent of the party who, by demanding everything out of hand, cause less to be actually obtained, and embarrass and retard the operations conducive to final success. I hope he will yet again be in the House, with his very vigorous talents rendered more useful by some abatement of his explosive and irregular fire; with less of that fitful and exuberant valour which threatens still worse luck to comrades than to the enemy.

But, leaving the conduct of the writer, shall I have your leave to make a few plain observations on some of the topics, not personal, of the letter? Mr. Roebuck's prediction of the inevitable and speedy expulsion of the Whigs from office must be made on the presumption of some egregious weakness or blunder in their conduct; otherwise, though their majority be so small, there seems no probable cause for an early desertion of so many as would reduce it to a minority, if the court be firmly faithful to them. Under present circumstances, the ministry can keep possession of the nominal ostensible power; but what power that will be for action, what it will enable them to effect, is a very different matter. It has been seen what they could do, rather what they could not do, with a somewhat larger majority. Is there any bold, decisive movement forthcoming to make them irresistible by force of a smaller?

Mr. Roebuck's assertion that the Tories have been victorious in the late contest, is palpably true in the sense in which he probably meant it, namely, that on a counting of the members returned, they have gained ground against the reformers, have conquered more places in the warfare than they have lost. And consider against what advantages on the side of the reform party and ministry this achievement has been made. There was the reforming ministry in actual possession—there were in fresh recollection the several great liberal measures by which, though frustrated, they had evinced their patriotic principles and intentions—there was the grand reform of the municipal corporations—

some measures were carried, and others attempted, in favour of the dissenters (I am here thinking of *their* confirmed adherence, as a very numerous portion of the community, aware that those measures cut two ways as to the support of the ministry)—the administrative benefits notoriously conferred on Ireland, and their pacific effect—the gallant, admiring, and almost affectionate sentiment for the Young Queen—the signally opportune deodand of the King of Hanover.

With all this in their favour, and asserting still that a great preponderance of the national mind is with them, the reformers have been doomed to see the opposition rising in numerical strength in Parliament by a gain which, however inconsiderable, it would have been in case of a great disparity between the adverse parties, is menacing when they are so near an equality. Mounted on a step nearer to the top (and *so* near), the Tories will beard the occupants of the platform, shouting “re-action!” and assuming, with insulting confidence, that they are the true representation of the nation’s opinion and will, the machinations of O’Connell and the Popish priests being the sole cause that they are not the actual majority; which, in a mood of mixed glee and fury, they are looking forward to the attainment of, by occasional vacancies, the rejection of some of the Whig members, in consequence of petitions against which they cannot afford the frightful cost of defending their seats, and the decisions on scrutinized cases by Tory election committees, like those of the last Parliament.

Such, Mr. Editor, is the Parliament which, according to all present likelihood, is to be fighting on through wasted weeks and months of another session, while the national business, except that of voting the supplies, remains in a state of arrest; and while all that care for the progress of liberal policy are indignant, disgusted, and all but desponding.

Now you, and all our reforming party, hold it certain that a genuine election would have returned a vastly different House of Commons; and so do the Tories also, as they have practically confessed, by expending probably a million, or perhaps far more, in corrupting the electors,



by an universal recourse to every possible device of imposition and force of coercion, and by keenly watching to take advantage of every questionable point of law, and every neglect or mistake of the reformers. Since all this has not brought them quite up to an equality in the contest, it is a very moderate assumption that one-third would have been the utmost of their number (even allowing for the degree, the far minor degree, in which the reforming party have imitated those bad practices), if the elections had been left to the mere choice by preference of the constituency—no bribery, no propagated falsehoods, no extorted promises, no threatened or apprehended injuries to punish the free exercise of the franchise. Such an exercise of it is the only sense of the principle of representation; and it was the intended, or the pretended, purpose of the Reform Bill. That bill, therefore, has notoriously been, to a very large extent, a wretched failure. “A final measure,” forsooth! The first triumphant exultation about it has long since passed away. The boasting of it, as our second Magna Charta, has gradually come to be heard seldomer and fainter. All who rejoiced in it are disappointed; and to many of them it has been a cause of bitter vexation. And, without some new and strong remedial provision, it will become progressively less and less available for its professed object. For the determination to render it null and void, working with a most comprehensive array of devices, machinery, management, and resources, has progressively become more systematic, confident, and successful. We saw an alarming failure of the bill in the election under Sir Robert Peel’s ministry. This last election, with so many circumstances in favour of a different result, has completed the evidence of its inefficacy. Let another dissolution be hazarded!—with the consummate organization, the desperate ardour, and the yet unconsumed wealth of the aristocracy in readiness to meet the trial; and when the appetite for bribes will be but the more voracious for what it has so recently fed on; when timidity, that has yielded before, will feel that, degraded already, it can sink no lower by yielding again; and when the resolutely honest, but in a certain sense dependent men, who have suffered before in reward of their integrity, will be in danger of losing their fortitude at the prospect of aggra-

vated injuries. (Yet I see Mr. Tooke, in his late address to the electors of Truro, gives a broad hint of the probability of such an event.)

Here, Mr. Editor I fall in emphatically with the remonstrant spirit of Mr. Roebuck's letter. Will the ministry, and a large proportion of their supporters in Parliament, still persist in maintaining the present condition of the elective franchise, subject to all the perverting and destroying agency which glares around them, and which, as a consequence, renders them impotent to accomplish the national improvements they profess to desire? To talk any longer of laws—laws against bribery and the other profligate interferences, is worse than nonsense, it is insulting nonsense. There are already penal laws, as stringent as multiplied clauses could make them, against such doings, heaped thick and manifold in the statute book; and who, in these late elections, cared a chaff for them, or needed to care, since not one violation of them in a thousand ever is or can be brought to conviction?

When Mr. Grote again makes his motion for the ballot, with arguments mightily reinforced by what he has lately witnessed, what has been witnessed all over the land, will the ministry, will Lord John Russell (whose opinion was for the ballot at the time the bill was in construction, and while it was unforeseen how miserably it could be frustrated)—will they, will he, stand forth, confronted by the regiment, more than three hundred strong, on the opposite side of the house, displaying before their ranks, as in scorn, the Reform Bill in rags for their standard, borne up by Sir Francis Burdett, or some other hero who has "girded on his armour" to fight against reform—will they, I repeat, declare that the bill is hitherto triumphant, and needs no strong supplementary accoutrement to secure its efficacy? Will they tell the reforming part of the constituency that they have only to preach to the unprincipled candidates and their agents against bribery and intimidation? or, failing in that, to persuade their unscrupulous or faint-hearted neighbours not to *take* bribes, or, as if for the mere fun of the thing, to set menaces at naught; and then for their own part, having thus got their neighbours up to the mark, to vote manfully away, without troubling themselves about

being damaged or ruined in their business, turned out of their farms, and their families involved in distress, of which they know not where to look for relief or compensation? Let only this, all so easy, be done and suffered at the next election, and all will come right again; all but the hapless condition of the voters, who will be punished for having been faithful to their duty.

All who have an interest in defeating the purpose of the Reform Bill have an excellent reason for deprecating the Ballot. But the obstinate resistance of those who profess to desire a genuine representation of the people does, I confess, surprise me after what they have seen within the last few years. Something short of a complete efficiency of the Ballot, and some considerable evils incident to it, especially and chiefly at first, are acknowledged by its advocates. In small constituencies it would not wholly extirpate bribery, or wholly defy the malignant inquisition of tyranny. (But there ought not to be any such small constituencies as some that the Reform Bill has left.) There would be, to many of the voters, a necessity of maintaining a kind of reserve and secrecy not well comporting with the frank and trusting habitudes desirable in society; a reserve, however, not much more strict than that under which men every where keep many circumstances of their business engagements and the state of their families. There would be also temptations, not easily resisted or evaded, to equivocation, or the direct breach of veracity. But it must be repeated and insisted, that these evils would diminish in proportion as it should be found that the Ballot did and would, on the whole, work successfully in defiance of the attempted interference; in proportion as it should be found that the taking of one rogue's bribe had no hold on another rogue's conscience, and that it was a profitless, as well as odious and unsafe game, as against the voters who had eluded the tyrant by means of deception, to be hunting them out for revenge in a crowd who would detest, and might find means to punish, the hunter; for nothing excites a stronger resentment than a coercion to do that for safety which is painfully felt to be wrong in itself. The evils of duplicity, prevarication, promises made to be broken, will abate with the abatement of their cause.

But the *cause*; where is the morality or common sense of not laying on *that* the main stress of the odium of what is alleged as inseparable from the Ballot? The Ballot would be given to the electors because there are tyrannic, unprincipled men, who will not suffer the honest electors, but at their peril, to vote according to their judgment and conscience, which has been inculcated on them as a positive and important duty to the public. After it is given them, in order that they may perform this duty and not be punished for it, those same tyrants are supposed to persist, not at all the less, in their iniquitous determination, imperatively dictating, exacting reluctant promises, under direct or intimated menace, and afterwards keenly scenting out the defaulters as the victims of their malice and iniquity. Now, then, the voters would be in this dilemma—they must either surrender wholly the protection of the Ballot, and remain just in the same exposed, enslaved condition as before, with the aggravated grievance of having a mockery of protection which their oppressors are laughing at, or they must seek to escape the consequences of doing their duty by a recourse to artifice, of what ever kind will avail them. Or is it come to this, that as they cannot, on the one hand, be protected in open voting, so neither shall they, on the other, be tolerated in seeking the only means for safety under the ballot? Then take away at once the pretended right and privilege of the franchise. For it is infamous to a free state to place its honest citizens in such a condition.

But the artifices of evasion and deception—against whom would they, by the supposition, be practised? Against men who will contemptuously violate all justice and law to compel the voters to violate their sense of duty—men who deserve a much more substantial infliction than that of mere disgrace for their conduct. Yet if, when driven into this dilemma, the elector, determined to do his duty to the public, resorts to the only expedient for doing it without a sacrifice of himself to the revenge of some arrogant villain, the whole horror of some of your moralists (hypocritical ones, as I suspect that many of them are) instantly falls on his crime of duplicity or prevarication; as if the expedient had not the same palliation in kind, whatever be the degree, as that of a man who saves his property, liberty, or

life by any dexterous imposition on a miscreant who comes on him with the threatening and power to take them away. It were such a fearful gap in morals that the assailant should not have a right to hold him rigorously to a nicety of truth! Some four or five months since, Mr. Editor, your journal related the adventure of a gentleman farmer (I think he was) who, returning in the night in his gig from a town where he had been on business, was stopped and assaulted by three ruffians, one of them seizing the horse, and the others beginning to beat him with bludgeons. The discharge of two pistols, loaded with only small shot, did not inflict such damage but that two of them continued resolute to their purpose; the one at the horse's head exclaiming to the other, "Come, Jem," or Ben, or some such christened vocable, "we shall do him yet; he has got no more." The gentleman said, "I've another for you," making sham of stooping as if to bring it out; on which they ran off, and he, unpardonable sinner that he was, took his life and property safe home to his family. It is not likely that this same sinner is in the class of *dependent* voters; but on supposition that he were, and that, in the event of an election by ballot, he were set upon by another sort of scoundrel with an imperative interference about his vote, he would not be long in recollecting how an artifice had availed him in his former rencounter. Of course I am not so absurd as to run the parallel the whole length; but both the cases come under the same principle of extenuation—if indeed a term implying any blame at all, could with the slightest propriety be applied to the former case.

Such is the principal evil on the one side, acknowledged, but thus palliated by a consideration of the infamous conduct which would continue for a while, to drive the dependent voters to deception for safety. The opposer of the ballot has to maintain—for in a choice of evils we must choose the less—that there is a less amount of what is to be reprobated and deplored on the other side. Look then, at that other; which is just saying look at the exhibition presented within the last two months. A multitude of citizens, steeped in the basest venality, sedulously and practically taught and urged by their superiors to make a traffic of what belongs to conscientious duty, a lesson which will

go in its effects much beyond the one subject and occasion—a conscious violation by both the payer and receiver of the wages of corruption of what is known to be not only the law, but a just and excellent law. Hence a system of disguise and clandestine management—that very secrecy, observe, which is so loudly denounced in the case of the ballot—the difference being that in the one case it would be for the protection of honesty; in the other it is for the impunity of roguery. These corrupt largesses, setting afloat all the coarse vices of the population, in every shape of intemperance and profligacy, as an ovation for the virtuous patriot who is going to assist in the enacting of laws to preserve the good order of the community. Many thousands and tens of thousands compelled, under dread of consequences, to vote contrary to their judgment, and many even to their promises, by landlords, wealthy customers, magistrates, and cleric dictators or sycophants (most likely they are both); some of these personages taking positions on the hustings to see that their slaves be obedient; and, perhaps, complacently looking on while gangs of hired ruffians are plying their bludgeons on the heads of the voters in an opposite interest, or volunteer blackguards of a “better class” are forcing their way on horseback to trample on the crowd. A great number, possessed of the franchise, consulting their safety by not voting at all; many others who would be glad to do so if permitted; and many declining the franchise as a badge of servitude. And then the account, an ample one if it could be taken in its whole extent, of the men resolutely honest, but far from independent, in the ordinary sense of the word, who, voting conscientiously at whatever cost, find in consequence the need of very strong faith in the maxim that “virtue is its own reward.” To this meritorious portion of the constituency, men such as every political institution should be specially favourable to, the Reform Bill has been a visitation of persecution and disaster.—I need not, in addition, advert again to that harassment and intolerable expense of petitions and scrutinies, now proclaimed as the scheme of desperate war by the anti-reformers, great and small, as a severely revengeful infliction, even if failing of its specific object.

Why should I go on with the odious detail? But look

at the upshot. The result of a mode of election subject to these flagrant perversions, true to the iniquity of the process, is a spurious representation of the people, in a House of Commons where we are now, in all probability, doomed to see the liberal policy rather struggling to maintain a precarious existence than aspiring to victory. But let the worst auguries be verified or exceeded, let the liberal policy be ever so effectually obstructed and baffled, those reformers will have no right to complain, who, in sight of all these abominations and this corresponding result of the one mode of election, have pronounced against the other, which would put an end to the greatest part of them, and return a House of Commons beyond all comparison more truly representative of the national mind. They prefer the system which they see *cannot* give a powerful reforming legislature. Let them silently acquiesce in the consequences. For my part, I shall hear any murmurs or lamentations from them with contempt.

As to the Whig ministry, they should not let themselves be "shut up in measureless content" with respect to the opinion and feelings of the people on this subject. A very great number of the earnest friends of reform in the middle classes, who expected to be of some value to the public welfare by means of the Reform Bill, and at less cost than the forfeiture of their own, have suffered a disappointment which goes far to destroy, in their estimation, the worth of that great national measure. How should it be otherwise, when, to many of them, it has proved a bill of pains and penalties? And when they see the government, as if heedless of any such consideration, persisting to oppose the only conceivable provision for the protection of conscientious voting, and for giving effect, as far as possible, to the professed design and principle of the bill, they feel, but regret to feel, their warm good will to that ministry cooling down, and its call on the people for zealous exertion to be anything rather than a generous requirement. They are beginning to say, How is it worth our sacrificing ourselves to support a government who refuse to protect us against some of the grossest wrongs in doing so; wrongs endured under the insolent triumph of those who inflict them, and the coarse contempt of the other class who are enjoying the venal re-

wards of violating their moral principles, or having none to maintain? Why, especially, these exertions, when the exposed condition in which by the will of the government, they are to be made at this cost, condemns them at the same time to be thrown away; since they are unavailing to secure an election though the real mind of a majority of the constituency were certainly with us? Why, again, when, as the effect of all this, the government appear in league with their mortal enemies, to deny *themselves* a parliament which would give them a most preponderating power for the prosecution of a liberal policy? If they are withheld by some unexplained, unavowed interests, or obligations, let them at least be aware, that their adherence to those interests cannot now be taken to imply less than their consent and their will to stand in office, destitute of the power to carry vigorously forward the great national improvements, for the sake of which alone they are by the people preferred to their opponents. Their frank support given at last to the protective measure, though not made formally a government measure, and though not carried in the first instance, would greatly conduce to retain, and even to recover, the popular attachment, which there are too evident signs they are in danger of losing.

In concluding, Mr. Editor, I am tempted to make an observation on the kind of conventional etiquette apparently recognised throughout the House of Commons. It is perfectly well known there by what means many of the seat-holders got there. Those who entered in an honourable way can run their eye over the benches and note many a front bearing the stigma. But let there not be a hint of allusion to this, though the integrity of the senate be vitiated by the fact. Let no voice mutter, "Bless the mark!" It were as disorderly and indecorous as an inuendo at an, natural feature, an overgrown or otherwise remarkable nose. In my simplicity I have sometimes wondered, when there has been a proud overbearing array of numbers against some patriotic measure, that no bold Cato in the assembly—if such there be—himself *integer & crispus purus*, should rise up in virtuous indignation, to declare aloud that such a house is not morally competent to a decision, being no genuine representation of the people; that many of the



honourable gentlemen have no right to be there, having made their way thither, and they know it, spite of their self-complacent and reciprocally complacent smiles of conscious security, by means which ought to have sent their agents to the treadmill, and themselves, as having authorized those agents, or at the least being cognizant of the villainy, and gladly taking the benefit of it, to a place where those gay looks would be apt to darken under the dingy light admitted through grated windows.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

NO TENANT AT WILL.

## LIST OF MR. FOSTER'S CONTRIBUTIONS

TO THE

### ECLECTIC REVIEW.

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[\*.\* The Articles marked with a † have been reprinted in the "Contributions,"  
edited by Dr. Price. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1844.]

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1806.

- 1.†Carr's Stranger in Ireland. *November and December.*

1807.

- 2.†Forbes's Life of Beattie. *January and February.*  
3. Thoughts on Affectation. *February.*  
4. Ensor's Independent Man. *April and May.*  
5. Gambier on Moral Evidence. *May.*  
6. Fawcett's Hints on Education. *May.*  
7. Janson's Stranger in America. *June.*  
8.†Memoirs of Lord Kames. *July and August.*  
9. Collyer's Lectures on Scripture Facts. *October.*  
10. Carr's Tour through Holland. *November.*  
11.†Blair's Life. *December.*  
12. Grant's Letters from the Mountains. *December.*  
13. Hibernian Society's Report. *December.*

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- 14.†Ritchie's Life of Hume. *January.*  
15. Barrow's Life of Lord Macartney. *February.*

- 16.†Vindication of the Hindoos. *March.*
- 17.†Pamphlets on India. *May.*
18. Stockdale on Poets. *May.*
19. Edwards's Narrative. *June.*
20. Cordiner's Ceylon. *July and August.*
- 21.†Fox's Historical Work. *September.*
- 22.†Macdiarmid's British Statesmen. *October and November.*
23. Life of Sir Thomas More. *December.*
24. Midas. *December.*
- 25.†Cunningham on Christianity in India. *December.*

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- 26.†Paley's Sermons. *January.*
27. Gass's Expedition. *February.*
28. Buchanan Prize Sermons. *February and March.*
29. Memoirs of an American Lady. *February.*
- 30.†Southey's Chronicle of the Cid. *March.*
31. Carr's Caledonian Sketches. *April.*
32. Account of Jamaica. *April.*
- 33.†Thomas's Letters on the Church, and a Layman's Answer. *April.*
- 34.†Scott Waring's Pamphlet. *May.*
- 35.†Sydney Smith's Sermons. *May and June.*
- 36.†Meadley's Life of Paley. *June.*
- 37.†Rose on Fox's History. *July.*
38. Lord Valentia's Travels. *August, September, October.*
39. Ancient Indian Literature. *September.*
40. Walker's Essays. *October.*
- 41.†Plumptre's Discourses on the Stage. *November.*
42. Lewis and Clarke's Travels. *November.*
- 43.†Chatfield's Historical Review of Hindostan. *December.*
- 44.†Characters of Fox. *December.*
45. Erskine's Speech on Cruelty to Animals. *December.*

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- 46.†Edgeworth's Essays on Professional Education. *January and February.*
- 47.†Pearson on Propagating Christianity in Asia. *February.*
48. Tenant's Indian Recreations. *March.*

- 49. Robinson's More's Utopia. *April.*
- 50.† Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Biography. *May.*
- 51. Aikin's Life of Huet. *June.*
- 52. Semple's Journey through Spain. *June.*
- 53. Report of the African Institution. *July.*
- 54. Clarke's Travels, Part I. *August.*
- 55.† Ramayuna, Vol. I. *September.*
- 56.† Edgeworth's Tales. *October.*
- 57.† Windham's Speech on Cruelty to Animals. *November.*
- 58.† Cottle's Fall of Cambria. *December.*

## 1811.

- 59. Travels of Abu Taleb. *January.*
- 60. Bourdon's Materials for Thinking. *January.*
- 61. Colyer's Lecture on Prophecy. *February.*
- 62.† Southey's Curse of Kehama. *March and April.*
- 63. Pike's Travels in North America. *April.*
- 64. Kirkpatrick's Nepaul. *May and June.*
- 65. Dudley's Metamorphosis of Sona. *May.*
- 66. Von Sack's Voyage to Surinam. *June.*
- 67.† Buchanan's Christian Researches. *July and August.*
- 68.† Kirkpatrick's Letters of Tippoo Sultan. *July.*
- 69. Hyatt's Sermons. *July.*
- 70. Carr's Travels in Spain. *August and September.*
- 71. Foot's Life of Murphy. *September.*
- 72.† Coleridge's Friend. *October.*
- 73. Ramayuna, Vol. II. *November.*
- 74. Report of the African Institution. *November.*
- 75. Hervey's Letters. *November.*
- 76.† Heywood's Vindication of Fox's History. *December.*

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- 77. Morier's Journey through Persia. *February and March.*
- 78.† Grant's Superstitions of the Highlanders. *February.*
- 79.† Aikin's Lives of Selden and Usher. *February.*
- 80.† Moor's Hindu Infanticide. *April.*
- 81.† Elgin's Pursuits in Greece. *April.*
- 82. Chandler's Life of Waynflete. *April.*
- 83.† Jesse's Sermons. *April.*
- 84. Foot's Vindication. *May.*

- 85. Plumptre's Narrative. *May.*
- 86. Gaisford's Essay on the Slave Trade. *May.*
- 87 Whitaker's Life of Radcliffe. *May.*
- 88 Wilmot's Life of Hough. *May.*
- 89. Hooker's Tour through Iceland. *June.*
- 90. Semple's Sketch of the Caraccas. *July.*
- 91. Biographie Moderne. *July.*
- 92.†Mudford's Life of Cumberland. *August.*
- 93.†Chateaubriand's Martyrs. *September.*
- 94. Drake's Gleaner. *November.*
- 95. Gunn's Sermons. *November.*
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- 97. Description of Terracottas. *December.*

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- 102. Calamities of Authors. *May.*
- 103. Zollikofer's Sermons. *May.*
- 104.†Gält's Life of Wolsey. *June.*
- 105. Chateaubriand's Beauties of Christianity. *July.*
- 106. Stoddard's Louisiana. *August.*
- 107. Gamble's View of Ireland. *September.*
- 108.†Stephens's Memoirs of Horne Tooke. *September and October.*
- 109. Forsyth's Remarks on Italy. *November.*

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- 110. Stanfield's Biography. *February.*
- 111. Bodleian Letters. *February.*
- 112. Semple's Tour to Hamburgh. *February.*
- 113.†A New Directory for Nonconformist Churches. *March.*
- 114. Dyer's Poetics. *April.*
- 115.†Philosophy of Nature. *May.*
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- 118. Krusenstern's Voyage Round the World. *June.*
- 119. Memoirs of a Celebrated Character. *September.*

- 120. Life of Cardinal Ximenes. *October.*
- 121. Penn's Bioscope. *October.*
- 122. Forbes's Oriental Memoirs. *October, November, and December.*
- 123. Dyer's Cambridge. *November.*
- 124. Memoir of the Queen of Etruria. *December.*

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- 125.†Butler's Life of L'Hôpital. *February.*
- 126. Ramond's Travels in the Pyrenees. *February.*
- 127. Salt's Travels in Abyssinia. *March and April.*
- 128. Eighth Report of the African Institution. *March.*
- 129. Wathen's Voyage to Madras. *May.*
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- 142. Description of Ancient Marbles. *July.*
- 143. Hoare's South Wiltshire. *August.*
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- 145. Memoirs of Madame De La Rochejaquelein. *November.*
- 146. Daniell's Oriental Scenery. *November.*
- 147. Parkyn's Monastic Remains. *December.*
- 148. Denon's Egypt. *December.*

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- 152.†Jeremy Taylor's Contemplations. *February.*  
 153. Legh's Travels in Egypt. *March.*  
 154. Sketches of India. *April.*  
 155. Holland's Travels. *April.*  
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 157. Antiquities of Attica. *May.*  
 158.†Chalmer's Astronomical Discourses. *September, October, November.*

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 180†Lane's Egyptians. *October.*

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*Note.* The *scientific* observations in there view of *Walker's Essays*, No 40, were not written by Mr. Foster, but (if the Editor has not been misinformed) by Dr. O. Gregory



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